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Version: Version of Record

Link(s) to article on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/doi:10.21954/ou.ro.0000bf12>

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‘A Platform Upon Which All Could Unite?: Temperance in Ulster and the Irish  
Temperance League, 1858-1914’

Orfhlaith Campbell, B.A (Hons), M.A

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

2016

## **Acknowledgements**

Firstly I would like to thank Dr. Leanne McCormick who encouraged me to pursue this path.

To the Arts and Humanities Research Council, and The Open University who funded the project. To the board of Irish Temperance League, I thank you all for letting me be a part of your organisation for the past three years. I will never forget the kindness with which I was treated. Being involved in the organisation today and observing how it operates was invaluable in understanding the aims and objectives of your predecessors.

My wholehearted thanks and appreciation go to my supervision team, Professor John Wolffe, Dr. Janice Holmes and Dr. Paul Darragh. All three went above and beyond the call of duty, providing a source of unrelenting support, always pushing me to challenge myself and continuing to believe in me at my weakest points. I cannot thank you enough!

Finally, to my family and friends who supported me throughout this process, and all its ups and downs. I couldn't have done it without you all. You provided laughter, an escape from all the stress, and a reminder of the bigger picture. A special thanks goes to Alexander Campbell and Dr. Kristen Nielsen Donnelly who read drafts and provided invaluable feedback. To Fionntan and Deaglan whose computer and counting skills came in very handy, to Ronan for the laughter, and to Mum, Dad, and Aidan who bore the brunt of it all and continued to dry up the tears.

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## **Abbreviations**

**BTAA** Belfast Total Abstinence Association

**BLTU** Belfast Ladie's Temperance Union

**BLVA** Belfast Licensed Vintners Association

**IPBA** Irish Permissive Bill Association

**IOR** Independent Order of Rechabites

**ISCA** Irish Sunday Closing Association

**ISWA** Irish Sacramental Wine Association

**ITL** Irish Temperance League

**IWTU** Irish Women's Temperance Union

**SCAI** Sunday Closing Association for Ireland

**SPBTA** Scottish Permissive Bill and Temperance Association

**STL** Scottish Temperance League

**UKA** United Kingdom Alliance

**UTS** Ulster Temperance Society

## Introduction

May our country, from the good seed we are now scattering, reap a golden harvest, and hand down to future generations an ever-strengthening determination to banish from our beautiful Island, forever, that foe which has, for many past generations, marred and destroyed the Happiness of her people.<sup>1</sup>

These words, from the Irish Temperance League's vice-president Mr. James Haughton in 1863, encapsulate the vision held by the organisation: a prosperous future for the citizens of Ireland through the removal of alcohol. With hindsight it is easy to view this as idealistic, and the course of history has demonstrated that the appeal of moderate consumption of alcohol was too strong to wield broad and lasting support for universal sobriety. Temperance reformers, in particular total abstainers, were aware of the difficult fight they had in contesting contemporary drinking customs. As Mr. Lawson Brown, then President of the League stated in 1896 'we all know that the temperance cause is not what could be called a popular one.'<sup>2</sup> That this movement had both opposition and many indifferent to it is undeniable, however this should not take away from the extensive and determined fight that the temperance movement put forth in Ireland from 1829 in order to promote its vision.

By the end of the nineteenth century an annual temperance demonstration was held on Ramore Hill, Portrush Co. Antrim. According to the *Belfast News-Letter* special trains were put on from the surrounding areas of Ballycastle, Coleraine and Ballymoney. This resulted in 'several thousand people' attending this event in order to listen to speeches and to show support for the values of sobriety and the legislative destruction of the drink trade.<sup>3</sup> This was only one of many similar events throughout

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<sup>1</sup> *Irish Temperance League Journal*, June 1863, p.91

<sup>2</sup> *Belfast News-Letter*, April 1869.

<sup>3</sup> *BNL*, 4 August 1896.

Ulster, and indeed Ireland, which continued into the twentieth century.<sup>4</sup> The atmosphere at these events was one of enthusiasm, purpose, and an attempt to bring about what the temperance community perceived as a better way of life.

Like many events in Irish history, the temperance movement was eventually overshadowed by the political controversies which came to dominate the early twentieth century. Thus the current body of Irish history research fails to acknowledge the prominence of the temperance movement as a significant social movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Discussion of temperance is often scattered amongst religion and philanthropic studies. David Hempton and Myrtle Hill's, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society 1740 – 1890* has a useful, but limited section on temperance in their study of Ulster.<sup>5</sup> Maria Luddy also includes a chapter on temperance work in her book, *Woman and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland*.<sup>6</sup> The coverage of temperance, therefore has been patchy and undeveloped. It has also been polarised along religious lines, with Catholic temperance activity receiving far more attention than Protestant counterparts.

Research into the Irish temperance movement began in 1938 following the publication of Patrick Rodgers, *Father Theobald Mathew, O. M. Cap: A Centenary Memoir*.<sup>7</sup> Following this most research focused on Father Mathew and the Catholic section of the temperance movement. For instance, Dairmaid Ferriter's, Colm Kerrigan's and Paul Townend's work, discussed below, focuses exclusively on

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<sup>4</sup> *BNL*, 21 June 1915; *Irish Independent*, 8 February 1918.

<sup>5</sup> David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society 1740 – 1890* (London: Routledge, 1992).

<sup>6</sup> Maria Luddy, *Woman and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> Patrick Rodgers, 'Father Theobald Mathew, O. M. Cap. : A Centenary memoir', *Capuchin Annual* (1938), 215-35.



Catholic temperance groups and movements. There are only a couple of articles in small journals that examine the work of Protestant temperance activists. In 1963 Thomas Barron published his study ‘Anne Jane Carlile (1775-1864), a Temperance Pioneer and Philanthropist’, who is best known for her role in the foundation of the children's temperance association the Band of Hope in Leeds in 1847.<sup>8</sup> This marks the first point at which research was undertaken into the work of a Protestant temperance reformer. Another article by Andrea Ebel Brozyna in 1992 discussed the work of Ulster's Protestant temperance reformers.<sup>9</sup> This was the first stand-alone piece of work that looked at the ITL however it is limited as it looks at temperance reformers perception of women within the content of the ITL's publication *The Irish Temperance League Journal*. While this is an important piece of work, it only begins the process of constructing the character of Protestant temperance activity in Ireland.

Brian Harrison's *Drink and The Victorians* is the foundational text for the study of temperance in England, which discusses the formative role of temperance reformers in Ulster in the creation of the British temperance movement.<sup>10</sup> For instance Harrison states that the temperance movement, which began in Ulster in 1829, was one of several contemporary attempts to propagate a middle-class style of life.<sup>11</sup> By uncovering the temperance movement's Ulster roots and its trajectory into England this work provides a framework for the study of the movement in any part

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<sup>8</sup> Thomas Barron, ‘Anne Jane Carlile (1775-1864), A Pioneer of Temperance’ in *Breifne: Journal of Cumann Seanchais Bhréifne*, 2 (1968), pp.234-37; “Anne Jane Carlile”, by Frances Clark, accessed 10 July 2016,

<<http://dib.cambridge.org.queens.ezp1.qub.ac.uk/quicksearch.do>>

<sup>9</sup> Andrea Brozyna, ‘The Cursed Cup Hath Cast her Down’: Constructions of Female Piety in Ulster Evangelical Temperance Literature’, *Coming into the Light, The Work, Politics and Religion of Women in Ulster 1840-1940*, ed. by J. Holmes and D. Urquhart (Belfast: Queen's University, 1994), pp.155–178

<sup>10</sup> Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians, The Temperance Question in England in 1815-1872* (Staffordshire: Keele University Press, 1971).

<sup>11</sup> Harrison, p.91.

of the United Kingdom. In 1986 the first and only monograph appeared which focused solely on the question of Irish temperance.<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Malcolm's *Ireland Sober, Ireland Free*, the foundation text for the study of temperance in Ireland, provides a longitudinal narrative of the temperance movement throughout the nineteenth century. It examines 'the social, cultural, and psychological dimensions of the drink issue as well as its political significance.'<sup>13</sup> While prominence is given to the Catholic temperance movement, Malcolm includes some discussion of the work conducted by Protestant temperance reformers. Like Harrison, Malcolm acknowledges the Ulster roots of the temperance movement however arguments are usually framed within a Catholic/nationalist discourse. For instance, Malcolm argues that the early temperance movement was an attempt by the Protestant ascendancy to increase their status, and prove moral superiority over their religious rivals and so-called economic inferiors.<sup>14</sup> This research has not found this to be the case. Nonetheless Malcolm's work represents the first time within the body of Irish temperance research that the Protestant character of the movement is acknowledged. However this work is limited as it primarily looks at the growth of temperance within the Presbyterian Church, failing to acknowledge the wider temperance movement, it has a strong focus on the legislative campaigns of the later nineteenth century and stops in the 1880s.

Colm Kerrigan's book, *Father Mathew and the Irish Temperance Movement 1838-1849*, is the main text for the study of Father Mathew's Total Abstinence crusade in the 1830s and 40s. Historians agree that Mathew's crusade was a popular movement and, while successful at the time, its effects were temporary and had no

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<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Malcolm, *Ireland Sober, Ireland Free, Drink and Temperance in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1986).

<sup>13</sup> Malcolm, p.1.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p.328.

lasting significance.<sup>15</sup> Contrarily, Kerrigan argues that one of the main elements of the campaign was the lifelong pledge that Father Mathew issued to his followers. The pledge was not exclusive to the crusade, as it was about a methodology initiated by temperance reformers in Ulster in 1829, and was in fact a significant part of all periods of the temperance movement. However it was the number of individuals taking the pledge during Father Mathew's crusade which magnified its prominence. Historians have debated the numbers making a commitment to total abstinence through the pledge and Kerrigan argues that it is impossible gain an 'accurate assessment'.<sup>16</sup> He believes that the figure of 700,000 is the most reliable account, implying that 'the movement penetrated less deeply than previously thought.'<sup>17</sup> Despite this the currently held argument maintains that Father Mathew's crusade represents the 'most dramatic manifestation of temperance in Ireland.'<sup>18</sup> Paul Townend's publication *Father Mathew, Temperance and Irish Identity*, furthers this argument and states that temperance never recovered from the rapid and general decline it experienced in the 1840s. Moreover Townend argues that 'never again would temperance as a social movement wield independent power in Irish society and politics.'<sup>19</sup> The research carried out for this thesis fundamentally challenges this argument. It shows that the ITL conducted an influential total abstinence campaign between 1858 and 1914. This organisation had national reach, a substantial level of social and political power and represented a manifestation of influence equal to, if

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<sup>15</sup> Malcolm, p.329; Dairmaid Ferriter, *A Nation of Extremes: The Pioneers in Twentieth Century Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 1999), p.7; Kearney, H. 'Father Mathew: Apostle of Modernization', in *Studies in Irish History*, ed. by Cosgrove, A and McCartney, D (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1979), p.165.

<sup>16</sup> Colm Kerrigan, *Father Mathew and The Irish Temperance Movement, 1838-1849* (Cork: Cork University Press, 1992), p.80.

<sup>17</sup> Kerrigan, p.80; Ferriter, p.21.

<sup>18</sup> Malcolm, p.331.

<sup>19</sup> Paul Townend, *Father Mathew, Temperance and Irish Identity* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2002), pp.259-260.

not greater than, Father Mathew's crusade. The ITL, still in existence at the time of writing, has promoted its aims and objectives for over 150 years.

Townend's book also suggests that the temperance movement 'rose phoenix-like' from the ashes of Mathew's campaign following the formation of the Catholic Pioneers in the 1890s. The Pioneers represent an organisation with high religious ideals and Father James Cullen, its founder, was successful in promoting temperance as a way to 'preserve the spiritual purity of those contemplating tampering with drink.'<sup>20</sup> Both Father Mathew's crusade and the Pioneers had more success with the Catholic community, however to suggest that the Irish temperance movement only consisted of these two periods entirely overlooks the movement in the years in-between during which the ITL developed a successful temperance movement. Diarmaid Ferriter's *A Nation of Extremes* is the most sustained study of the Pioneer organisation. The Pioneer movement was not aimed at the mass of the population, but rather at the Catholic elites with the belief that leading by example would influence the masses. Therefore any segregation from the rest of the temperance community was largely the result of the Pioneer's own ethos. Nonetheless the current research largely fails to contextualise the Catholic section of the movement with its Protestant peers. For instance Ferriter's chapter on the origins of the temperance movement does not mention the ITL. This is problematic as he discusses the temperance movement in Britain and America, and the United Kingdom Alliance (UKA) and its political campaigns in the late nineteenth century, but fails to acknowledge the organisation that was conducting the same work in Ireland at this time.

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<sup>20</sup> Ferriter, pp.4-34.

More recently research into the Irish temperance movement has begun to take a broader look at the question. For instance Maria McHale's 'Singing and Sobriety: Music and the Temperance Movement in Ireland 1838-1843', looks at the significant place songs and ballads had within the movement.<sup>21</sup> Elizabeth Malcolm's most recent publication 'Between Habitual Drunkard and Alcoholic: Inebriate Women and Reformatories in Ireland' considers the work of the temperance movement in relation to the development of medical treatment between 1899 and 1919.<sup>22</sup> In addition Conor Reidy's *Criminal Irish Drunkards* has also looked at the development of state-sponsored medical treatment for those with significant alcohol problems.<sup>23</sup>

Other work has begun to focus on the work of the ITL. For instance Gillian McIntosh's 'Providing an Alternative to the Public House: The Irish Temperance League and the Creation of the First Coffee Chain in Belfast in the 1870s', focuses specifically on the League's innovative use of coffee kiosks and stands as an alternative to Belfast's drinking culture.<sup>24</sup> While these contributions are valuable as particular and detailed studies, there still remains a lack of proper treatment of the ITL. It is this gap which this research aims to address. It constitutes the first in-depth study of the ITL as a professional total abstinence organisation at the centre of the temperance movement, rather than as a footnote to the Catholic temperance movement. It provides an institutional history of the League, placing it within the

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<sup>21</sup> Maria McHale, 'Singing and Sobriety: Music and the Temperance Movement in Ireland 1838-1843' in *Music in Nineteenth Century Ireland*, ed. by Michael Murphy and Jan Smaczny (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth Malcolm, 'Between Habitual Drunkard and Alcoholic: Inebriate Women and Reformatories in Ireland', in *Gender and Medicine in Ireland, 1700-1950* ed. by Margaret H. Preston and Margaret Ó hOgartaigh (London: Syracuse University Press, 2012).

<sup>23</sup> Conor Reidy, *Criminal Irish Drunkards, The Inebriate Reformatory System 1900-1920* (Dublin: The History Press Ireland, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Gillian McIntosh, 'Providing an Alternative to the Public House: The Irish Temperance League and the Creation of the First Coffee Chain in Belfast in the 1870s', in *Urban History*, 2 (2012), pp.1-16.

context of the entire Irish temperance movement in order to show the changes that it brought about from the late 1850s onwards. This research will also show how the formation of the ITL put the Irish temperance movement on par with the temperance movement in Britain at this time. This challenges Ferriter's argument that the Irish temperance movement was in its infancy at the end of the nineteenth century.<sup>25</sup> In addition this work looks at the ITL's links to, and relationship with, religious and political elements of Irish society between 1858 and 1914. Therefore in addition to highlighting the similarities between the movements in Britain and Ireland, this work will highlight the substantially different backdrop which Irish temperance reformers had to contend with.

In an attempt to address the gap in the historiography, and to develop an institutional history of the ITL over a forty-year period, the research for this thesis constituted an in-depth analysis of the institutional archive which is located at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland in Belfast. The archive is described by other researchers as 'a particularly rich primary source, containing temperance material, but also reflecting contemporary social and cultural concepts.'<sup>26</sup> It consists of 86 volumes, comprising 49 minute-books (1872-1998) and 37 printed journals (1863-1940).<sup>27</sup>

*The Journal*, which was first published in 1863, provided a consistent source over the period in question. The wealth of material within this publication delivered information on League personnel, affiliated societies, its spread throughout Ireland, and the extent of the organisation's connections to the temperance movement in England, Scotland and America. Articles covered a range of topics and presented the

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<sup>25</sup> Ferriter, p.30.

<sup>26</sup> McIntosh, p.12.

<sup>27</sup> Papers of the Irish Temperance League, 1863– 1940, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (hereafter PRONI), Belfast, D2663.

ITLs main concerns including, legislative reform, the destruction of the drink trade, scientific temperance and the provision of educational material relating to temperance. An in-depth examination of such a rich and detailed source like this allows for an analysis of the development of the organisation's ideologies and its changing opinions over a specified period of time. This was particularly important when tracing the ITL's opinions on legislation, the relationship between temperance and religion and the development of an alternative teetotal culture.

However as a monthly periodical, produced for a specific audience, this was the public face of the organisation and thus reflected the 'image' that the executive committee worked to present to society. For instance *The Journal* was often used to present rhetoric of a financially struggling organisation in order to entice followers to donate additional funds. Yet as is discussed in Chapter Three this did not reflect the reality. The League was content in the knowledge of financial assistance from its wealthy members as and when required. All information was posed in a manner which gratified the organisation's supporters. Even when articles discussed controversial issues, it was usually to discuss why the ITL was right and their critics were wrong.

The minute books therefore offered a useful source of comparison, as they represented the private discussions within the organisation. The minute books mainly constitute a record of the weekly meetings of the executive committee of the ITL, however there are also a number of books relating to the meetings of sub-committees. This source allowed for a further analysis of the development of ideas within the League and an understanding of its priorities when considering what work was pursued and what was abandoned. For instance the development of the coffee business over the dry pubs as discussed in Chapter Three highlights the importance

the League placed upon modernising contemporary social functions. However meetings typically followed a specific agenda which limited the amount and quality of information they provided. There was also an issue surrounding the condition of the minute books. For instance while it is clear from the formatting style that the minutes always began with a list of those in attendance, the writing was often illegible thus making it impossible to highlight the individuals in attendance or the nuances of conversations. While the ITL archive was a vast source, it was not a complete source as *The Journal* was first published in 1863 and the minute books are only available from the early 1870s. Therefore information on the very earliest years of the ITL is limited. However detailed accounts of the ITL's meetings were published in the *Belfast News-Letter* during this period. Thus the newspaper constituted a supplementary source which delivered extensive coverage of the ITL's meetings throughout the 1850s and early 1860s.

Using both *The Journal* and the ITL's minute books however comes with the inherent problems of studying an organisation via its own records. Both sources have a certain amount of bias, and researchers run the risk of comprehending the organisation solely through its own eyes. For instance looking at the nineteenth century drink question through the archives of a total abstinence organisation, one could easily believe the rhetoric of a problematic drinking culture among all intemperate members of society. However the organisation was not objective about the 'drink problem'. Consequently, in order to maintain a sense of reality when preforming an institutional history, researchers have to make a robust effort to frequently distance themselves from the source and keep in mind the wider context of the time. For example while the ITL perceived that poverty, crime and disease derived from drinking customs researchers must remember that this was not the



reality and there were a range of factors which led to these issues. In addition while the ITL viewed crime statistics as an indication of the 'drink problem' others viewed the same statistics as proof of a reduction in the extent of drunkenness.

Yet understanding the magnitude of the ITL's perception of the drink problem was key to understanding its aspiration to advance the total abstinence movement and destroy the drinks trade in Ireland. However this can only be appreciated when the researcher has a wider understanding of the issue in question. Thus for this research it was necessary to consult a number of supplementary sources in order to gain a balanced perception of the work of the League. The *Belfast News-Letter* is mentioned above as it was used in order to supplement the gaps in the ITL's archived minutes. However the *BNL* was frequently used in this research in a wider capacity as it was supportive of the temperance movement in Ireland from its formation in 1829. Therefore by using this source the researcher is able to follow the trajectory of the Irish temperance movement and identify changes within it. This has supplemented the ITL's internal records and provided a fuller picture of temperance membership, policy-making, and the provision of counter-recreations as the century progressed. As a strong Ulster and Belfast organisation, the ITL did most of its advertising through the pages of the *BNL* therefore researchers are able to map the development of an alternative culture which the ITL provided for its followers. Such advertising was also carried out in the *Freeman's Journal* and more localised newspapers in Ireland such as the *Killarney Echo*. While these are also included within this research, prominence was given to the *BNL* as it provided a comprehensive look at the temperance movement throughout Ireland, as opposed to more partial coverage.

While the *BNL* was supportive of the temperance movement, it was also critical of organisations when it felt they went too far with certain ideas. For instance the *BNL* was critical of the early attempts to incorporate legislative prohibition into the Irish temperance movement. This reflected the general contemporary concern that legislative temperance was an interference with personal liberty. Moreover the *BNL* printed many criticisms of the ITL's political conduct during elections in the late nineteenth century as discussed in Chapter Four. This demonstrates the general opinion among the temperance community on the severity of the ITL's political agitation against certain candidates, which ultimately caused some of its own supporters to turn against it. Opposition to the ITL could constitute a substantial piece of research in its own right however it was not the focus of this dissertation. For researchers interested in this area the main newspapers in nineteenth century that opposed the temperance movement and in particular were *The Mercury*, *The Banner of Ulster* and *The Northern Whig*.

In addition, a number of government sources were also consulted such as statistics for crime and drunkenness, commissioned reports on the extent of drunkenness, the Sunday Closing inquiry, and the Physical Deterioration inquiry. While many of these concerned Britain as a whole, key temperance reformers from Ireland gave evidence about the extent of the problem in their area. Rev John Edgar of the Ulster Temperance Society and Mr Robert Lindsay of the ITL, gave evidence at different commissions. That the government commissioned these reports suggests that while concerns may not have been as extreme as those within a total abstinence organisation, there was enough concern being generated among society at large in order to warrant such a measure. However both Edgar and Lindsay gave testimonies which largely followed their 'party line' thus the researcher must approach such

sources with objectivity and bear in mind that such statements do not reflect the reality but instead may have been used to push a specific ‘temperance’ agenda.

This work primarily focuses on the work of the League and its attempts to advance the values of total abstinence throughout Ireland, to destroy the drink trade and to bring about prohibition. Patterns of contemporary drinking habits are not the focus of this research. However it is impossible to discuss the temperance movement’s attempts to destroy the drink trade without an understanding of the social context of nineteenth-century Belfast, and contemporary concerns which led to the formation of the ITL and its approach to the temperance movement. While it is difficult to analyse the reality of the ‘drinking problem’ in the nineteenth century, the aforementioned sources are useful in providing researchers with an understanding of total abstinence reformers - who were typically from a middle or upper class background in Ireland – and their perception of the ‘problem’ which in turn helps to understand their determination to bring about social reform or prohibition. Kerby Miller states that industrialisation and the mass rural-to-urban migration in Ulster in the nineteenth century eroded traditional behaviour patterns.<sup>28</sup> The population of Belfast in 1800 was 20,000. By the middle of the nineteenth century this had risen to 100,301.<sup>29</sup> Historians have found that in America, shortly after immigrant societies were established, taverns and other forms of drinking establishments quickly ‘sprang up in Irish neighbourhoods.’<sup>30</sup> James Barrett states that following high levels of migration into Boston between 1846 and 1849 the number of liquor dealers rose

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<sup>28</sup> Kerby Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles, Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North American* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), p.229.

<sup>29</sup>“General Index, Ireland, 1851”, accessed 13 January 2016, [www.histpop.org](http://www.histpop.org).

<sup>30</sup> John Frick, *Theatre, Culture and Temperance Reform in Nineteenth Century America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.38.

from 850 to 1200.<sup>31</sup> In Belfast there were similar concerns of a perceived increase in drinking establishments in the town in the early 1850s. In 1852 the Belfast Town Mission commented on the ‘progress of vice among the large population, the greater portion of which was caused by the existing and increasing number of spirit shops which were flaming at every corner’.<sup>32</sup> The use of the fiery metaphor in this quote was clearly an attempt to depict these establishments as a door to hell through participation in the ‘sinful’ act of consuming alcohol. Yet there was, in fact, a decrease in the number of spirit dealers in Belfast. In 1832 there was 522. By 1852 the number was reduced to 490.<sup>33</sup> Comparatively however in 1852 there were 147 spirit houses throughout the rest of Co. Antrim. While there was one spirit house for every 1703 people in Co Antrim, this was reduced to one pub for every 205 people in Belfast, indicating that there was a significant difference.<sup>34</sup> Belfast however was more densely populated with over ninety thousand people located within a radius of five square miles.<sup>35</sup> The rest of Co. Antrim was a large rural area and therefore likely to have fewer spirit shops. Nonetheless temperance reformers, with unsophisticated means of measuring access to alcohol were concerned by what they perceived to be an excessive increase of spirit shops in Belfast when compared to the rest of the county.

The location of spirit dealers in Belfast also heightened the perception of a problematic working-class drinking culture. Barrett states that Irish immigrant communities maintained almost two thirds of Boston’s spirit dealers.<sup>36</sup> In Belfast the proportion was only slightly smaller: in 1852 47.33% of all spirit dealers in Belfast

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<sup>31</sup> Barrett, p.155.

<sup>32</sup> *BNL*, 27 October 1852.

<sup>33</sup> “The Belfast Street Directory, 1852”.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>35</sup> “General Index, Ireland, 1851”.

<sup>36</sup> Barrett, p.155.

were located in working-class areas.<sup>37</sup> The working-class areas, which had the highest number of spirit dealers, were North Queen Street, Cromac Street, the Falls Road and the Shankill. In terms of North Queen Street a contemporary report clearly demonstrated middle-class perception of these working-class areas. Rev James O'Hanlon, a Methodist minister who published the results of his 'investigations' into Belfast's poverty in the 1850s, believed that 'no other part of the town boasts more immorality as this...most of the shops are public houses.'<sup>38</sup> The table below shows spirit dealers as a percentage of the number of houses. The reality was that these areas did have a high density of spirit dealers. Yet the high density in these areas, in addition to O'Hanlon's comments, suggests that this may have been a popular 'drinking area' in Belfast which would have attracted people from across the city. Subsequently these areas would not be representative of the city's 'true' drinking habits, but rather a reflection of a popular activity in a certain vicinity. Nonetheless the fears surrounding these areas were hampered by this misperception of working-class drinking habits. For example the commercial areas of North Street and Smithfield were a stone's throw away from the working-class area of Carrick Hill. 34.16% of spirit dealers were located in commercial areas of Belfast. For instance twenty-three spirit dealers were located on North Street alone, which represented 4.73% of all spirit dealers in Belfast. Ann Street and Smithfield, which had 4.12% and 3.50% of Belfast's spirit dealers, followed this. The high demand in commercial streets in Belfast was no doubt a reflection of its position as the metropolis of Ulster. The spirit shops were catering to the needs of the large quantity of visitors coming and going every day. Concerns were also exasperated by the fact that Belfast was

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<sup>37</sup> Working class areas were identified using, Marcus Patton, *Central Belfast a Historical Gazetteer* (Belfast: Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, 1993).

<sup>38</sup> Rev William O'Hanlon, *Walks Among the Poor*, (Belfast: n.p. 1852), p.14.

geographically tight meaning that the spill over between commercial and residential was frequent.

Contemporary reports also exacerbated the middle-class perception that the working classes were vulnerable to alcohol which resulted in a high demand for drink in their areas. The *Belfast News-Letter* reported in 1852 that

There is great commercial prosperity and we rejoice in it but this very prosperity has brought into our town a large number of persons most ignorant, and requiring special attention.<sup>39</sup>

This was followed by O'Hanlon who stated in his study that

Intemperance is preying upon the strength, and to a large extent, eating out the very life of that proportion of the community whose only wealth and capital lie in their strong arms.<sup>40</sup>

Location	Total number of houses	Spirit Dealers	Spirit Dealers as % of houses per street
<b>Belfast</b>	<b>15100</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>3.22%</b>
North Queen Street	96	16	16.67%
Cornac Street	100	15	15.00%
Falls Road	51	14	27.45%
Shankill Road	166	12	7.23%

**Table 1.1: Number of spirits dealers in Belfast, per house, in 1852 (Source: Street Directory Database, entries for Belfast, 1831-52 accessed online at [www.proni.co.uk](http://www.proni.co.uk))**

In 1853 Rev Hugh Hanna of St Enoch's Presbyterian Church, voiced concerns that in the streets of Belfast he had never seen a greater number of intoxicated

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<sup>39</sup> *BNL*, 27 October 1852.

<sup>40</sup> O'Hanlon, p.8.

persons.<sup>41</sup> The unhealthy living conditions and the perceived ‘inappropriate behaviour’ of the poor was clearly a significant cause of concern for middle class reformers, who believed that where rising levels of ‘crime, domestic misery, disease and squalid poverty [where] to be found in the community’ habits of intemperance were the chief cause.<sup>42</sup> Government statistics concerning the numbers arrested for crime and drunkenness during this period also exasperated middle class opinions of the ‘drink problem’. As is discussed in Chapter One temperance reformers remained concerned about the numbers of arrests for crime and drunkenness for Co Antrim which were significantly higher in comparison to every other county, particularly in Ulster.<sup>43</sup> This no doubt enhanced middle class opinion that the new industrial centre of Ulster was causing the higher levels of crime and inappropriate drinking customs. However between 1850 and 1862 arrests, despite a few fluctuations, were decreasing throughout Ireland. Arrests for drunkenness continued to decrease throughout the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. However zealot temperance reformers such as those found within the ITL, while they commended any decrease in what they perceived as the effects of alcohol consumption, remained concerned with the numbers of individuals who continued to be ‘victimized’ by the drink trade thus making rendering any reduction in statistics irrelevant from their perception.

## Chapters

This research starts by looking at the trajectory of the Irish temperance movement between the 1820s and 1850s in order to contextualise the formation of the League in 1858. A problem with the existing temperance literature is that it fails to consider the nuances of the temperance movement across nineteenth-century

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<sup>41</sup> *BNL*, 17 August 1853.

<sup>42</sup> O’Hanlon, p.8.

<sup>43</sup> Appendix One

Ireland. According to Malcolm, Irish temperance transitioned from a period of moderation (1830s), through total abstinence (1840s), and into prohibition (1860s onwards). This is problematic as a 'stages model' as proposed by Malcolm suggests that there was only one form of temperance activity during each period. Such a characterisation is a useful starting point, as it highlights the main changes within the movement, however it ultimately fails to adequately explain the structure of the Irish temperance movement that is vital to understanding the issues which led to the formation of the ITL.

There were two styles of temperance in Ireland, moderation and total abstinence, and two methodologies, moral suasion and legislation. As this research will show it was the relationship between the styles and methodologies which complicated the temperance movement and ultimately lead to its fragmented and disorganised nature prior to 1858. For instance as is shown in Chapter One before the formation of the ITL in 1858 it was common for the different styles of temperance to employ the same methodology. Thus between 1820 and 1850 both moderationists and total abstiners used moral suasion. Following the introduction of legislative temperance in the early 1850s some members from both the moderationist and total abstinence camps began to use legislative temperance in pursuit of their aims. Attempts were made to work together however differing opinions on the extent of legislation led to a lack of unity and direction, which ultimately destroyed its effectiveness. By the mid 1850s the Irish temperance movement was chaotic as the tendency to group reformers according to preferred methodology was causing a lack of unity between those of the same style and therefore those who had the same ideologies and aims. In others words prohibitionists working with moderationists was ultimately ineffective as one group merely aimed to reduce alcohol consumption



while the other group wanted to destroy it. By 1856 total abstinence reformers, who later became founding members of the ITL, were putting steps in place that would re-organise the temperance movement, giving it a sense of unity and direction. As will be shown the founding members of the ITL learned from their experiences in the temperance movement prior to 1858 and subsequently developed a more professional and organised movement.

Chapter Two provides a biographical analysis of the individuals who made up the core leadership of the ITL, and thus those who implemented the policy and direction of the organisation. Ferriter states that temperance advocates from the late nineteenth century tended to be socially and economically comfortable.<sup>44</sup> Olive Checkland's work *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland* makes similar observations in her study of temperance in Scotland. She argues that during the nineteenth century the mainly middle-class temperance movement sought to improve the quality of the working classes so that the recourse to drink might be lessened.<sup>45</sup> The biographical analysis within this research largely concurs with these findings. The core leadership of the ITL between 1858 and 1914 continued to be drawn from the more affluent sections of society. However this research aims not to oversimplify the ITL's objectives to merely control of the working classes and takes into consideration its profound attempts to produce a teetotal culture within which everyone from all classes and backgrounds could participate.

Chapter Two also examines the motives and core objectives of the ITL. It will argue that the ITL's fundamental aim was to unify all total abstinence societies and reformers in Ireland. Thus the League pioneered a new approach to the

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<sup>44</sup> Ferriter, p.9.

<sup>45</sup> Olive Checkland, *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland: Social Welfare and the Voluntary Principle* (Edinburgh: Donald, 1980), p.90.

temperance movement, grouping reformers according to style of temperance (total abstinence) and incorporating a dual methodology (moral suasion and legislative prohibition). This was more effective as reformers had the same goal regardless of the methods used to get there. Ferriter argues that one of the main changes within the temperance movement was the move from moral to political persuasion that happened over the course of the nineteenth century.<sup>46</sup> While the trajectory of this argument is true, it falsely polarises two temperance methodologies that, for the ITL, operated side-by-side: moral suasion and legislative prohibition. Malcolm's work only considers the ITL's legislative work, while McIntosh highlights its moral suasion efforts. This thesis seeks to consider the ITL in a holistic way, demonstrating the substantial moral suasion work which the League conducted between 1858 and 1914 while acknowledging its role as one of the leading political pressure groups in Ireland.

The ITL also wanted to unite all total abstinence reformers and societies throughout the island of Ireland. Historians of the Irish temperance movement debate the extent to which temperance was an urban phenomenon. Harrison states that there was a link between the textile manufacturing towns such as Belfast and Glasgow and the anti-spirits movement of the early nineteenth century.<sup>47</sup> Kearney argues that the movement in the 1830s was also an urban-based movement which may have affected some rural hinterlands but left large areas untouched.<sup>48</sup> Malcolm on the other hand argues that the movement won most of its recruits in the countryside and small towns and not in the large urban centres.<sup>49</sup> However there were high levels of migration from rural to urban areas throughout nineteenth century therefore the temperance

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<sup>46</sup> Ferriter, p.8.

<sup>47</sup> Harrison, p.91.

<sup>48</sup> Kearney, p.172.

<sup>49</sup> Malcolm, p.145.

movement could be viewed as an attempt to uphold rural standards of conduct in an urban environment.<sup>50</sup> As is shown in Chapter Two, the ITL as an organisation attempted to challenge the urban focus of the temperance movement and used the networks which existed within the Protestant churches in order to expand into rural areas throughout Ireland. The ITL was successful in uniting total abstinence reformers and societies under its umbrella, and by 1912 it had developed a substantial network of total abstinence societies in every province in Ireland comprising of both urban and rural areas.

In addition by using a dual methodology which incorporated a wide range of services, the ITL united people from all classes under its umbrella. As will be shown, the League made profound attempts to provide services for both its working-class members and those from the more affluent sections of the community. However while the League promoted the rhetoric of being a movement for all, in reality this had limitations. Contemporary social structures, attitudes and values were maintained. In addition the with regards to co-operation between Protestant and Catholic temperance reformers, the League failed to adopt an ethos that was inclusive of all religious denominations in Ireland. However this must be considered against the backdrop of religious and political tensions in Ireland in the later nineteenth century that made crossing the religious divide impractical and unwarrantable. The failure, if it can be called such, to unite Protestants and Catholics under its umbrella was not entirely the League's fault, but rather a consequence of the religious divide in Ireland.

Chapter Three focuses on the League's moral suasion work. It will show that this was an extensive section of the Ulster/Protestant temperance movement and

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<sup>50</sup> Harrison, p.70.

challenges the current argument that reformers in the northern province concentrated on legislative prohibition in the late nineteenth century. This chapter also details the structures of this section of the League and shows how it too incorporated a dual methodology, encompassing a professional strategy, which provided the organisation with social and business prestige, and financial security, and an outreach strategy, which worked towards educating its followers and providing opportunities for support, prevention and recovery.

The extent of the League's moral suasion work did not take away from its legislative work and the ITL continued to conduct a strong political campaign based on public agitation, resistance to local practices, and attempts to reform licensing legislation in co-operation with the UKA. The legislative work of the League is the focus of Chapter Four. This will show how the formation of the League professionalised legislative temperance in Ireland. Much of the ITL's work in this area was conducted in connection with the UKA and the wider British temperance movement. Therefore this chapter will show how the same issues, which inhibited the British movement, are also to be found in Ireland. For instance an inability to compromise which ultimately self-destructed prohibitionist aims and an unrelenting belief in the need for the destruction of the drink trade at the expense of individual freedoms. However, where the Irish temperance movement differed from its English peers was due to the political tensions which were building in Ireland. Therefore Chapter Four considers the relationship between temperance and Irish politics against the backdrop of the growing Home Rule movement.

Chapter Five looks at the relationship between the ITL and organised religion in Ireland. In order to contextualise the ITL this chapter looks at four different stages within this relationship between temperance and religion in order to highlight the

changes over the course of the nineteenth century. The current historiography suggests a strong relationship between temperance in Ulster and the Presbyterian Church. However to focus on temperance within the churches in Ireland, particularly the Presbyterian Church as Malcolm does, is to ignore the reality of the Irish temperance movement. Chapter Five will argue that in fact the temperance movement in Ireland was developed due to a lack of temperance work from within the Church.

The early reformers tended to be evangelicals, and those with religious faiths that demanded strong personal lifestyle changes, such as Methodists and Quakers. It took a longer period of time for more mainstream denominations like Presbyterians and Church of Ireland to adopt temperance/total abstinence ideals. Many of the founding members of the ITL were actively involved in the first stage of the temperance movement in Ireland when temperance was a strong part of the evangelical mission. However these individuals gradually migrated to the margins of the evangelical community in Ireland, placing prominence upon moral reform over religious conversion. In this the members of the ITL were more similar to English non-conformists as opposed to their Irish peers. Chapter Five also clearly identifies the relationship between the ITL and the evangelical revival which broke out in Ulster in 1859. The close proximity in time has connected these two events in the current historiography however this research shows that the ITL pre-dates the revival. Having said that, the ITL and the revival had a mutually beneficial relationship for a number of years due to the prominence place upon moral reform throughout society. This ultimately enabled the ITL to flourish in its early years.

Yet over the course of the nineteenth century, increasingly more of the temperance movement was driven by secular ideas and a modern vision of society in

which religious faith in God played only a minor role. In particular, an increase in medical and scientific research and the provision of social alternatives to contemporary practices in order to bring about a moral reformation. In terms of Scotland for instance Olive Checkland agrees that temperance was fundamentally based on evangelical principles. However she furthers this argument by identifying a three-part progression of the movement from piety through temperance to the provision of social facilities.<sup>51</sup> In Ireland the ITL followed a similar trajectory, espousing increasingly secular justifications for temperance as the century progressed. However as an organisation it also maintained its fundamental associations with the churches and individual faith and prayer. In this, the ITL attempted to act as a broad church, a wide umbrella, under which reformers of all types could unite. As Chapter Five argues, the League anticipated the secular methods which were increasingly incorporated by the temperance movement and was willing to adapt to these. Therefore by sticking to its key ethos, the ITL attempted to unite total abstinence reformers who were motivated by their religious faith – mainly evangelicals – and those motivated by more secular ideas, such as good health, moral living and work-based productivity.

Throughout all the chapters this research has employed the contemporary words and language used within the contemporary sources for certain events or descriptions. For instance the word ‘temperance’ follows the trajectory of the movement over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In the early stages of the movement, ‘temperance’ meant moderation. However, in later stages of the movement ‘temperance’ came to mean a general description of activity directed towards controlling alcohol consumption. This is the meaning which has been

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<sup>51</sup> Checkland, *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland*, p.90.

adopted in this research. When talking about specific approaches to alcohol control these have been clearly indicate these using the terms ‘moderation’ or ‘total abstinence’. This thesis also uses the term ‘moral suasion’ in order to signify a methodology employed by the temperance movement which attempted to persuade individuals into a life of sobriety. The term ‘drunkard’ is also employed in order to represent those who were perceived to have a detrimental relationship with alcohol. While considered derogatory today, temperance reformers frequently used this term when speaking about those most in need of drink reform. The word ‘alcoholic’ is not used in this research as it suggests a level of medical knowledge in regards to addiction which temperance reformers did not yet possess at this time. Both ‘moral suasion’ and ‘drunkard’ were well known concepts and definitions and frequently employed throughout the nineteenth-century temperance movement. To change them within this thesis would have diminished their importance within any discussion of contemporary temperance discourses.

## Chapter One

### Temperance in Ireland prior to the Irish Temperance League

*Up, then and be doing, men of patriotism – men of piety; a tide of intemperance, rising every hour, is hurrying all moral and religious institutions before it; up and be doing now, or weep when all is over, on the closed grave of your country's glory.*

Rev John Edgar in a letter to the *Belfast News-Letter* in 1829

There has been a continuous and active temperance movement in Ireland since 1829. It has been a fluid movement throughout the years with many changes in its aims, ideals, and terminology.<sup>1</sup> The first temperance society in Ireland was founded in Skibbereen in Co Cork in 1817. This small society was made up of an estimated twelve members who pledged to abstain from all intoxicating drinks. This was however a localized group, which had little influence outside its surrounding area. Therefore the beginning of the anti-spirits movement in Ulster in 1829 is generally considered the official start of the Irish temperance movement. Reformers in this early stage of the movement taught that the moderate use of alcohol was acceptable as long as spirits were avoided. This was quickly overwhelmed by the growth of the total abstinence movement in the 1830s.

In order to contextualise the formation of the Irish Temperance League (ITL) this chapter looks at the movement in Ireland prior to the formation of the League in 1858, examining the different styles and methodologies and the evolution of the relationship between them. The first two styles of temperance employed the methodology of moral suasion, which attempted to persuade individuals to reduce or abandon their drinking habits. Conversely, by the 1850s the perceived effects of alcohol were still visible in society. This caused some temperance reformers, disappointed by their perceived lack of progress, to turn to the legislative methodology whereby attempts were made to restrict or prohibit access to alcohol through the enactment of legislation.

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<sup>1</sup> Malcolm, *Ireland Sober, Ireland Free*, p.323.



This chapter will analyse the trajectory of the Irish temperance movement and show how it paved the way for the formation of the ITL and its unique approach to the temperance question. The chronology of this chapter is loosely based upon Malcolm's 'stages' model as this is useful to highlight the main changes within the movement. However the classifications used in this chapter should not take away from the complexity of the temperance question. Notably when a new style of temperance became popular with the movement this did not mean that the prior style was removed from society as a whole. For instance as is shown in Chapter Five the churches in Ireland continued to have a strong moderationist approach to temperance up until the 1870s when legislative temperance was gaining popularity with some reformers.

As will be shown individuals who later became founding members of the ITL often brought about the stylistic and methodological changes within the Irish temperance movement. Therefore by focusing on this evolution one can highlight the context which led to the formation of the League. Thus this chapter will argue that Protestant temperance reformers in Ulster were actively involved in the temperance movement prior to the formation of the ITL in 1858. In addition it will show that the roots of the ITL can be traced back to the formation of the Irish temperance movement in 1829.

### ***Styles of Temperance***

In pre-famine Ireland the consumption of alcohol was 'regarded as one of life's necessities' and 'men in all ranks laboured under strange delusions as to the properties of ardent spirits.'<sup>2</sup> W.D. Killen, who wrote the renowned temperance reformer Rev John Edgar's biography, gives readers an idea of the drinking customs which concerned the founding leaders of the Irish temperance movement. He stated

Every soldier had his daily rations of strong drink; every ship which went to sea was furnished with a daily allowance... Whiskey was to be found in every house, and was employed as a remedy for almost every malady. If an infant was sick punch was administered; if a man was dying, he was sustained by the same cordial,

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<sup>2</sup> W D Killen, *Memoir of John Edgar* (Belfast: William Mullan, 1869), p.26.

if death occurred, all who attended the funeral were qualified, by what was called a dram, for travelling to the place of interment.<sup>3</sup>

The consumption of spirits was also a required aspect of hospitality and within all manner of business deals. In addition the churches in Ireland exhibited a high tolerance to alcohol. For example it is reported that in Presbyterian churches whiskey was provided for the preacher as he descended from the pulpit or conducted home visits.<sup>4</sup> Certainly the ordination services, when a new minister was ordained to a congregation, were well known as events where significant amounts of alcohol were consumed.<sup>5</sup> Alcohol in pre-famine Ireland was also seen as a fundamental part of recreational activities.<sup>6</sup> Festivals, fairs, markets, sporting events, weddings and even wakes in Ireland offered numerous opportunities for drinking.<sup>7</sup> In addition the local public house offered a focal point for weekly leisure and socialising.<sup>8</sup>

The recreational and leisurely nature of popular sociability meant that drinking customs and their perceived consequences were visible in the public sphere. Consequently concerns regarding the ‘vice of intoxication among the labouring classes’, led to the first ever government-sponsored inquiry into the state of drunkenness in Britain, which was held in 1834.<sup>9</sup> This *Report from the Select Committee on Inquiry into Drunkenness* was used to assess the necessity of controlling contemporary spirit licences. Rev John Edgar, minister of the Second Seceder Church in Belfast and Professor of Theology in the college department of the Royal Belfast Academical Institution, was involved in the inquiry,

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<sup>3</sup> Killen, p.26.

<sup>4</sup> Finley Holmes, *Our Presbyterian Heritage* (Dublin: Columba Press, 1985) p.116.

<sup>5</sup> John Barkley, *A Short History of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* (Belfast: Presbyterian Church, 1959), pp.68-71.

<sup>6</sup> Sean Connolly, *Priests and People in Pre-Famine Ireland 1780-1845* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1982), p.167.

<sup>7</sup> Colm Kerrigan. ‘The Social Impact of the Irish Temperance Movement, 1839- 1845’ *Irish Economic and Social History*, 14 (1987), p.23.

<sup>8</sup> James Barrett, ‘Why Paddy Drank: The Social Importance of Whiskey in Pre-Famine Ireland’, in *Journal of Popular Culture*, 11, 1 (1977), p.161.

<sup>9</sup> *Report from the Select Committee on Inquiry into Drunkenness*, 1834, (559), 8, VIII.315.

giving evidence in support of such measures in Ireland.<sup>10</sup> The concerns raised in the report, indicate that the middle and upper classes believed that there was a problematic drinking culture in society, particularly among the lower classes. Within the answers to his first two questions Edgar suggests that the lower classes in Ireland were more likely to have problematic drinking habits than any other class.<sup>11</sup>

Legal control at this stage constituted tighter regulations on sections of the drink trade such as licences, tax and limitations on certain types of alcohol. Essentially these elements affected the price and convenience of alcohol and set boundaries on the drink trade that limited access, but had no direct effect on an individual's choice to drink. The report indicated that between 1820 and 1830 the consumption of spirits in Ireland increased by almost 6 million gallons.<sup>12</sup> Ireland also had a considerable problem with illicit distillation.<sup>13</sup> Poteen, as the illegal form of whiskey was commonly known, 'accounted for half, perhaps two-thirds, of all spirits consumed in Ireland.'<sup>14</sup> Therefore considering these figures and the popularity of drinking customs in Ireland, it is possible to understand why the middle and upper classes perceived a problematic drinking culture among society.

### Moderation

Similar issues in America led to the formation of the American Temperance Society (ATS) in 1826.<sup>15</sup> The ATS was the first national temperance organisation in America, which promoted the idea of abstinence from distilled spirits. At this stage in the temperance movement all other forms of alcohol were permitted so long as drunkenness was avoided. By 1831 the ATS had 2,220 local chapters throughout America, with 170,000

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<sup>10</sup> *Inquiry into Drunkenness*, p.65.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> *Inquiry into Drunkenness*, p.65.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Malcolm, *Ireland Sober, Ireland Free*, p.62.

members who had taken a pledge to abstain from drinking distilled spirits.<sup>16</sup> Rev Joseph Penny, an Irish Presbyterian clergyman from Drumlee in Co. Donegal, had emigrated to America in 1819.<sup>17</sup> It is presumed that Penny was actively involved with the ATS for when he returned to Ireland in 1829, he was ‘full of the zeal for the extension of temperance societies and earnestly pressed their claims on the attention of many of his Irish brethren.’<sup>18</sup> Before he left Ireland, Penny had attended university with Rev John Edgar.<sup>19</sup> Killen suggested that Edgar weighed Penny’s arguments and ‘promptly determined to make the cause his own.’<sup>20</sup> Only weeks previously a local committee in Belfast had appointed Edgar ‘to draw up an address to the public on the best means of discouraging the sale and consumption of ardent spirits on the Lord’s Day.’<sup>21</sup> No further information is given regarding the nature of this committee, but Edgar’s appointment as the one to address the public on behalf of the committee is his inaugural appearance as the leader of the anti-spirits movement in Belfast. In terms of timing therefore Penny’s return to Ireland was ideal. His knowledge of the American anti-spirits movement offered Edgar a ‘solution’ to the Irish drink problem. Killen states that Edgar was known for his abrupt manner and ability to effectively argue his point.<sup>22</sup> He was clearly of the persuasion that actions spoke louder than words and following his ‘conversion’ Edgar,

inaugurated his proceedings by opening his parlour window, and pouring out into the court before his house in Alfred Street, the remaining part of a gallon of old malt whiskey purchased...for family consumption.<sup>23</sup>

This marked the start, not only of Edgar’s personal temperance journey, but the entire Irish temperance movement.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>“The American Temperance Society”, Anon, accessed 5 January 2015, <http://www.alcoholproblemsandsolutions.org/Controversies/The-American-Temperance-Society.html>.

<sup>17</sup> Killen, p.28.

<sup>18</sup> Malcolm, p.62.

<sup>19</sup> Killen, pp.6-21.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, p.28.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Killen, pp.16-17.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p.29.

Edgar believed that in order to promote reform ‘there must be a general influencing of public opinion.’<sup>25</sup> His first attempt to increase public awareness on the matter of temperance made use of the local press. He published a letter in the *Belfast News-Letter* on 14 August 1829 which stressed that

it is absolutely necessary...that some system of instruction and of action should be immediately adopted, calculated to make a steady and powerful impression on the present and following generations; and by thus ultimately effecting a change of public sentiment and practice, in regard to the use of intoxicating liquors, which has already caused such desolation in every part of our country and which threatens destruction to the best interests of this great kingdom.<sup>26</sup>

Harrison argues that evangelical opinion on drinking customs created the anti-spirits movement.<sup>27</sup> This is identifiably in terms of Edgar, as an evangelical minister he was motivated by the need to save souls. In addition over the early nineteenth century the churches increasingly began to deem many traditional forms of recreation inappropriate.<sup>28</sup> This was particularly important within the Protestant churches where concerns were growing in regard to the desecration of the Sabbath. Thus Edgar’s letter reflects the growing religious opinion concerning the ‘violation’ of the Lord’s Day through demoralizing habits such as drinking. He stated that

Experience shows that cessation from labour without religious and moral instruction, results in dissipation and excess more injurious to mind and body than unremitting toil. The Sabbath as a mere holiday has always exerted a most terrific, demoralising influence.<sup>29</sup>

However Edgar also felt that

To attack single-handed and at once, the whole host of Sabbath breakers might be dangerous. Let there be a division of labour and commence with the most flagrant and inveterate cause of profanation. The sale and use of intoxicating liquors.<sup>30</sup>

Sabbatarian rhetoric is clearly identifiable in the issues raised by Edgar. However, as Malcolm argues, the letter also revealed that Edgar's ‘thoughts on the matter had

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<sup>24</sup> Killen, p.62

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> *BNL*, 14 August 1829.

<sup>27</sup> Harrison, p.2.

<sup>28</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People*.

<sup>29</sup> *BNL*, 14 August 1829.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

evolved.<sup>31</sup> Edgar believed that simply stopping the sale of spirits on a Sunday would not be enough. He argued that 'to have sanctity on the Sabbath, there must be temperance all year round.'<sup>32</sup> The contents of his letter suggested to contemporaries that they were fighting Sabbath desecration in the wrong way. Instead of attacking all inappropriate behaviours on one day of the week, Edgar was suggesting that the vice of spirit consumption all times should be condemned. This would then, he argued, lead to a moral and religious reformation, which would lead to the sanctification of the Sabbath.

Religious ideologies concerning personal salvation underpinned many of Edgar's ideas. When it came to temperance Edgar's main concern was simply prevention; preventing the continuation of the spirit trade, preventing society from persisting with its unhealthy attitude to drink, preventing children from being subjected to contemporary attitudes to drink and thus preventing a new generation of drunks.<sup>33</sup> Collectively this was an attempt to 'prevent' souls from eternal damnation. Subsequently the recovery of those who had already succumbed to alcohol was not a concern of the temperance movement at this stage. This view from temperance reformers was based upon the biblical passage (1 Corinthians 6:10), which states that 'drunkards shall not inherit the Kingdom of God.'<sup>34</sup> Edgar believed that the current generation of 'drunks' were beyond redemption. He made it clear in his letter that

as a first principle in the commencing reformation...it is not necessary for insuring success, to reform the present generation of drunkards. It is not with them, but with the temperate members of society, that we have to deal with first.<sup>35</sup>

Edgar's disregard for drunkards reflected a belief that as they had yielded to a life of sin, the time would be better utilised on individuals capable of redemption. He believed that to effect lasting change the temperance movement would have to start off small and with a specific target.<sup>36</sup> The first stage of the temperance movement in Ireland thus began among

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<sup>31</sup> Malcolm, p.62.

<sup>32</sup> *BNL*, 14 August 1829.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> *BNL*, 20 November 1829.

the urban, Protestant, middle and upper class in Ulster. On 24 September 1829 the Ulster Temperance Society (UTS) was formed in the old tract shop on Waring Street in Belfast. The object of this new society was

To disabuse the public minds of these destructive errors, respecting ardent spirits, which have long possessed it; to show the world that consistently with health, and happiness and religion there can be no such thing as their ordinary use.<sup>37</sup>

The founding members in addition to Edgar were Rev James Morgan (Fisherwick Presbyterian Church), Thomas Hincks (Curate of St Anne's Parish Church), Rev Thomas Houston (Knockbracken Reformed Presbyterian), Rev Hugh Hunter (Methodist New Connexion), Rev Mathew Tobais (Donegal Square Methodist), and Mr. Alexander S. Mayne, proprietor of the Ulster Tract Depository.<sup>38</sup> Both Morgan and Mayne were founding members of the ITL thus demonstrating the link between the formation of the Irish temperance movement in 1829 and the League. This was Edgar's peer group and those most likely to agree with his principles. These names also represented the Presbyterian, Church of Ireland and Methodist churches in Ireland.<sup>39</sup> The significant number of clergymen and the interdenominational character of the UTS demonstrated, the anti-spirits movement's position within the sphere of evangelical outreach: it wanted to advance respectability and personal salvation.

Due to their position in society Edgar believed that the middle and upper classes were granting the spirit trade an unwarranted level of respectability. He maintained that it was these individuals, who continued to consume spirits, who blocked the path towards the reformation of drinking customs. For instance Edgar voiced concerns over the

multitudes of sober men – men never seen drunk, who drink more ardent spirits than would kill half a dozen men of common constitution; the numbers of very

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<sup>35</sup> BNL, 20 November 1829.

<sup>36</sup> Killen, p.30.

<sup>37</sup> BNL, 20 November 1829.

<sup>38</sup> Killen, p.43; Donald, 'The Origin and Development of the Temperance Movement in Ireland', in *Fifty Years Ago, Erin's Temperance Jubilee*, ed. by Fredrick Sherlock (Belfast: n.p. 1879) p.35.

<sup>39</sup> Donald, p.33.

temperate men who consider a daily portion of ardent spirits absolutely necessary to their bodily health.<sup>40</sup>

Once the more affluent members of society stopped using spirits, their actions and beliefs would filter down and the rest of society would follow. At the very least Edgar argued that drunkards could not maintain the spirit trade alone if the more affluent members of society turned away. He stated, 'the present generation of drunkards may give it feeble support for a time, but it [spirits] will be buried in their graves.'<sup>41</sup>

By the early 1830s there was 150 temperance societies in Ulster containing an estimated 15,000 members.<sup>42</sup> However the influence of Edgar's ideas were not confined to Ulster; he was also regarded as the father of Irish and British temperance. Following a conversation with Edgar, in Belfast, Rev George Carr, a Congregationalist minister from Co Wexford, returned home and formed the New Ross Temperance Society on 20 August 1829.<sup>43</sup> Through daily correspondence between Belfast and Scotland, John Dunlop Esq, of Greenock, quickly initiated the movement there.<sup>44</sup> Norma Logan Davis states that Dunlop had been concerned for some time as he felt that the number of occasions in which it was socially acceptable to become drunk was escalating.<sup>45</sup> Like Edgar, Dunlop had a supportive number of peers who helped him start a local society after which they began to print Edgar's temperance material in Glasgow. Following this Mr. Henry Forbes, a worsted manufacturer, who had been at a temperance meeting in Glasgow returned home and spread the movement 'through England from the textile centres of Preston, Bradford and Leeds.'<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Donald, p.33.

<sup>41</sup> *BNL*, 14 August 1829.

<sup>42</sup> Killen, p.64.

<sup>43</sup> Donald, p.33.

<sup>44</sup> Killen, p.3.

<sup>45</sup> Norma Davies Logan, 'Drink and Society: Scotland 1870 – 1914' (PhD thesis, University of Glasgow, 1983), p.3.

<sup>46</sup> Brian Harrison, *Drink and the Victorians: The Temperance Question in England 1815-1872* (Staffordshire: Keele University Press, 1971), p.92.



In 1826 the American Presbyterian minister and temperance reformer, Dr Lyman Beecher published *Six Sermons on the Nature, Occasions, Signs, Evils and Remedy of Intemperance*. In 1830 these were reprinted in Britain, with an introductory essay by Edgar. Edgar's high regard for the American temperance movement is visible within his essay. Edgar wrote that

the means which these societies employ for the promotion of temperance, are information, exhortation, and associated exertion; and, while they use all the influence of precept to reform the intemperate, they connect with this, the influence of example in their own abstinence from distilled spirits, and discountenancing all the causes and practices of intemperance; believed, not only that intemperance cannot be effectually remedied while the present undefined moderate use of intoxicating liquor is indulged in, but that by the permanent withdrawal of the support and countenance of the temperance from the trade in ardent spirits it must of necessity be ruined.<sup>47</sup>

Therefore like the ATS, the UTS

hoped to revolutionise public sentiment by diffusing sound views of the nature and use of ardent spirits; and they reckoned on saving sober men from contagion by pledging them to proper habits.<sup>48</sup>

In pursuit of its aims, the UTS made use of the press and the pulpit, and held meetings and demonstrations in an attempt to change public practice when it came to drinking spirits.<sup>49</sup>

In addition Edgar published and preached extensively on the subject. Material included, *Scriptural Temperance: A Discourse Preached in Fisherwick Place Church, Temperance: Drunkards Shall not Inherit The Kingdom of God, and The Evils, Cause and Cure of Drunkenness; With an Account of the Temperance Movement*.<sup>50</sup> From 1832 Edgar began to edit the monthly periodical the *Temperance Advocate*. The UTS also hired an agent who travelled around Ulster forming local temperance organisations. By adopting these methods the UTS set the precedent in Ireland for a temperance movement that was organised, professional and educational. These traits remained important, especially within

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<sup>47</sup> Dr. Lyman Beecher, *Six Sermons on The Nature, Occasions, Signs, Evils and Remedy of Intemperance* (Bradford: n.p. 1830), p.3.

<sup>48</sup> Killen, p.45.

<sup>49</sup> BNL, 14 August 1829.

<sup>50</sup> Rev John Edgar, *Scriptural Temperance: A Discourse Preached in Fisherwick Place Church, Temperance. Drunkards Shall Not Inherit the Kingdom of God, The Evils, Cause and Cure of Drunkenness; With an Account of the Temperance Movement* (Belfast: n.p. 1830).

the Protestant temperance movement in Ireland and were the principles upon which the ITL built their organisation in the 1850s.

The findings of the 1834 inquiry into the state of drunkenness stated that ‘the vice of intoxication had been for some years past on the decline in the higher and middle ranks of society’.<sup>51</sup> Evidently the drinking practices of the more affluent members of society were changing. In Ulster Edgar attributed this to the formation of the temperance movement.<sup>52</sup> Yet, in terms of the lower classes the report found that drunkenness ‘had increased in the lower grades of the population.’<sup>53</sup> The temperance movement at this stage was removed from the lower classes in society. As a result traditional drinking customs remained largely untouched. The working classes and rural poor continued to believe that drinking spirits would prevent one from getting diseases. For example the cholera epidemic in 1832 was believed to have increased the level of demand for spirits among this class.<sup>54</sup> The UTS tried to combat this by suggesting that cholera was a punishment from God sent to the drunkards.<sup>55</sup> This reinforced the perception of drunkards as sinners and highlights the strong religious ethos of the UTS’s approach to temperance.

The increase in spirit consumption indicates that temperance reformers were a marginalized group at this stage, having no real influence on public opinion and were largely ignored. The range of recreational activities, available to the rural population, continued to provide opportunities for heavy drinking.<sup>56</sup> In urban areas the 1834 report indicated that employers continued to provide their workers with spirits in order to increase production.<sup>57</sup> In addition wage slips continued given to workers in public houses. The publican would then exchange the pay docket for money. Social etiquette then required the worker to buy a drink, which in turn ‘tempted’ men into drinking their wages on a

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<sup>51</sup> *Inquiry into Drunkenness*, p.318.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid*, p.60

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*; Malcolm, p.85.

<sup>55</sup> Killen, p.55.

<sup>56</sup> Kerrigan, p.20.

<sup>57</sup> *Inquiry into Drunkenness*, p.70.

Saturday night. Drinking reportedly continued into Sunday and was identified as the reason many did not go to work on Monday morning.<sup>58</sup> Furthermore legislation passed in the 1830s increased taxes on spirits and this increased the amount of illicit distillation throughout Ireland.<sup>59</sup> In 1833 and 1834 a police force, established to combat illicit distillation, seized 16,000 stills, illustrating the level of demand for spirits that remained in Ireland. Edgar himself admitted in 1834 that in Ulster ‘private distillation [had] seldom, if ever, been worse.’<sup>60</sup> The 1834 report concluded that ‘the greater numbers and the force of the temptations placed in the daily path of the humbler classes by the establishment of additional places at which intoxicating drinks were sold’ was adding to the increase in drunkenness.<sup>61</sup> This is important as concerns regarding the number of public houses and the temptation this levied on the working class became the focal argument used by the temperance movement in the late nineteenth century.

Therefore while there was evidence to suggest that the actions of the upper and middle classes were changing, this was failing to filter down to the rest of society as Edgar had hoped. For the majority of society, and among those whose drinking habits were perceived to be problematic, moderation was seen to be ineffective. Increasingly throughout the 1830s moderation became insufficient for many temperance reformers who wanted to effect social and moral reform. More radical reformers began to view anti-spirits as hypocritical suggesting that ‘anti-spirits men were determined to rid the lower order of their addiction to whiskey, but had no intention of altering their own drinking habits.’<sup>62</sup> There was a growing belief that in order to implement change all drink had to be avoided.

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<sup>58</sup> Inquiry into Drunkenness, p.70.

<sup>59</sup> K.H. Connell, *Irish Peasant Society, Illicit Distillation* (Dublin: Colour Books, 1996), pp.1-50.

<sup>60</sup> Inquiry into Drunkenness, p.67.

<sup>61</sup> Killen, p.70.

<sup>62</sup> John Quinn, ‘The “Vagabond Friar”: Father Mathew’s Difficulties with the Irish Bishops, 1840-1856’, in *Catholic Historical Review*, 78 (1992), p.543.

## Total Abstinence

In England in the early 1830s, the changing attitude to temperance encouraged the development of teetotal societies.<sup>63</sup> In August 1832 seven men in Preston signed a pledge to abstain from all intoxicating drink. Mr. Joseph Livesey, a poor man who became a successful entrepreneur and social campaigner, was the unofficial group leader.<sup>64</sup> It was Livesey's energy and determination that spread the total abstinence movement rapidly throughout England in the 1830s.<sup>65</sup> The difference in this stage of the temperance movement was the number of working-class men who were leading the charge when compared to the middle and upper class ethos of the moderation stage. Like Livesey, these individuals believed that through the total abandonment of alcohol they could liberate themselves from the detrimental effects of drinking customs, as a form of self and social improvement.<sup>66</sup>

While Edgar was regarded as the father of the temperance movement, Livesey became known as the father of total abstinence movement. Following his success in England the new form of temperance, aimed at abstinence from all alcohol, quickly spread back to Ireland. In 1834 Mr. John Finch, a total abstainer from Liverpool was touring Ireland and formed 'the first regularly organised teetotal society in Strabane.'<sup>67</sup> Soon after in 1837, the Belfast Total Abstinence Association (BTAA) was formed.<sup>68</sup> The lack of information about the movement in the press between 1834 and 1836 indicates that the movement had minimal activity at this stage. Despite this it continued to grow and by 1838 there were teetotal societies in Lisburn, Tandragee, Holywood and Belfast.<sup>69</sup> Just as the

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<sup>63</sup> Malcolm, p.62.

<sup>64</sup> Harrison, p.64.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

<sup>67</sup> Donald, p.35.

<sup>68</sup> Linen Hall Library, Belfast, Belfast Total Abstinence Association Minute Book (1837-58), Manuscript Collection.

<sup>69</sup> *BNL*, 9 January 1838; *BNL*, 13 February 1838.

moderation stage had been encouraged by events in America, the teetotal movement was introduced in Ireland and influenced by the teetotal movement in England.

Evidently by the late 1830s in Ireland temperance was no longer synonymous with moderation. It now comprised moderationists and teetotallers. Teetotallers believed that total abstinence ‘from all intoxicating drinks was the only effectual moral remedy.’<sup>70</sup> Moderation was thought to be wrong as it permitted the use of certain alcohols and therefore placed temptation in the way of drunkards. This belief was no doubt heightened by the findings of the report of the select committee in 1834.<sup>71</sup> From a moderationists’ point of view, however, as ‘the use of wine...is warranted in Scripture’ total abstinence was unbiblical.<sup>72</sup> Rev John Donald of Banbridge and member of the ITL, in an article describing the changes in the temperance movement at this stage stated,

It was found after a trial that the old temperance societies were not equal to the task they had undertaken. Moderate drinking furnished the recruits for filling the ranks of the drunkard’s army. These good men did not as yet understand the inveteracy of the disease they had undertaken to cure, the cause they had espoused was actually crushed by the recoil of their own engines. All honour to these philanthropic men who set the machinery in motion. They did good work and some of them moved into the region of total abstinence.<sup>73</sup>

In 1838 Mr. John Hockings, a reformed drunkard, who was popularly known as the ‘Birmingham Blacksmith’, was touring Ulster promoting total abstinence.<sup>74</sup> According to Malcolm, Mayne who had been a founding member of the UTS had been responsible for inviting Hockings to Ireland.<sup>75</sup> At a meeting in Lisburn in 1838, Hockings stated that ‘he had been a member of the Temperance Society at first but he soon found that teetotalism was the thing for the poor man and he joined it.’<sup>76</sup> Hocking’s premise was that ‘the teetotal society was the working man’s own society, and, although respectable people denied

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<sup>70</sup> *BNL*, 19 January 1838.

<sup>71</sup> *Inquiry into Drunkenness*.

<sup>72</sup> Killen, p.94.

<sup>73</sup> Donald, p.36.

<sup>74</sup> *BNL*, 19 January 1838.

<sup>75</sup> Malcolm, p.161.

<sup>76</sup> *BNL*, 19 January 1838.

themselves, it was for an example to the working class.’<sup>77</sup> At one of Hocking’s meetings in Belfast in 1838 Rev Grant, committee member of the BTAA made the following comments,

how could he ask any man to quit his drinking if he continued to indulge in this glass of wine? He could not; but as it was said of Alexander the Great, that he led his men and invited them to follow, so he would not say go, but he would first give up all himself and then say come and by so doing, he would have a better chance of succeeding.<sup>78</sup>

By wanting to effect change through setting an example, the early total abstinence movement in Ulster tried to build on Edgar’s approach to temperance. However reformers now realised that the example set by the middle and upper classes had to be relatable to the lower classes in order to change drinking habits. The attempt to build upon the methods inaugurated by Edgar is not surprising considering that the early total abstinence movement in Ulster was formed by those who had been part of Edgar’s moderation movement. Some, such as Mayne, clearly broke with Edgar’s beliefs and were now ardent teetotallers.<sup>79</sup> For instance Mayne’s pro-active approach to get Hockings to Ireland emphasizes his divergence from Edgar, and his emergence as an autonomous early leader of the total abstinence movement. This no doubt enhanced the ‘annoyance and embarrassment’ that Edgar felt at the formation of the total abstinence movement in Ulster.<sup>80</sup> In order to promote his opposition to total abstinence Edgar gave a number of sermons and produced a range of anti-teetotal material until his death in 1866.<sup>81</sup>

Unlike England, where early teetotal reformers were of a working-class background, the leaders of the movement in Ulster continued to be drawn from the middle class. Yet Mayne’s efforts to bring Hockings to Ireland demonstrated an attempt to make total abstinence more accessible to the working classes and rural poor. As a reformed drunkard, Hockings provided a visual example of the transformative benefits of a teetotal lifestyle. In

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<sup>77</sup> *BNL*, 13 February 1838.

<sup>78</sup> *BNL*, 19 January 1838.

<sup>79</sup> Killen, p.94; Malcolm, p.161.

<sup>80</sup> Killen, p.94.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, p.96.

addition his working-class background also meant that the majority of the population in Ireland could relate to him. Reporting on one of Hocking's meetings in 1838, the *Belfast News-Letter* stated 'we understand that upwards of 1000 tickets were either sold or received at the doors, which in some degree, shows the interest excited by the subject.'<sup>82</sup> Evidently Hockings' presence was generating public interest in the total abstinence movement. Conversely however while Hockings' meetings indicates that there was growing public interest in the total abstinence movement in Ulster, it was Father Theobald Mathew's crusade, which began in Cork in 1839, which turned the total abstinence movement in Ireland into a popular, albeit an almost exclusively Catholic, movement.

As in Ulster, the leadership of the total abstinence movement throughout Ireland was mainly Protestant.<sup>83</sup> However John Quinn states that in Cork in 1837, total abstainers were trying to 'find an articulate spokesman who could draw the Catholic masses into the movement.'<sup>84</sup> Following this Father Mathew was inaugurated as president of the Cork Total Abstinence Society (CTAS) on 10 April 1838.<sup>85</sup> Mathew was a Capuchin monk who travelled throughout Ireland promoting total abstinence and forming local societies.<sup>86</sup> Unlike the moderation stage of the temperance movement which focused on saving souls, Father Mathew's crusade aimed at the moral, social, and economic improvement of its followers.<sup>87</sup> Like Hockings, Mathew attempted to empower the poorer classes by concentrating on the advantages a teetotal lifestyle could offer them.<sup>88</sup> Moral suasion continued to be used at this stage in the temperance movement in order to promote this message. However instead of articulated arguments in tracts and sermons, Mathew's total

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<sup>82</sup> *BNL*, 19 January 1838.

<sup>83</sup> Malcolm, p.99.

<sup>84</sup> Quinn, p.543.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, pp.542-556.

<sup>86</sup> Kerrigan, p.4.

<sup>87</sup> Kearney, H. 'Father Mathew: Apostle of Modernization', in *Studies in Irish History*, ed. by Cosgrove, A and McCartney, D (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 1979), pp.164-175.

<sup>88</sup> Kerrigan, p.20.

abstinence crusade 'relied on images, medals, music, entertainment, lectures and alternative recreations to reach its largely illiterate audience.'<sup>89</sup>

The key method employed during this stage of the movement was the total abstinence pledge which Mathew administered to individuals.<sup>90</sup> Colm Kerrigan states that by 1842 an estimated five million people had taken the pledge.<sup>91</sup> While Father Mathew's crusade was never officially linked with the Catholic Church, the process of receiving the pledge was symbolic of the process of Catholic confession. Individuals knelt before Father Mathew who then made the sign of the cross to absolve an individual of their drinking sins. The act of keeping the pledge symbolised their penance. Once Mathew had administered the pledge he prayed 'God give you strength to keep your resolution' over the individual.<sup>92</sup> Like confession, the pledge was presented as a sacred obligation, cleansing penitents of their previous sins and giving them the power to change their lives. However like the revolving relationship between sins and confession, participants could simply renew their pledge if they broke it and took a drink. Therefore it took minimal commitment and no permanent sacrifice from followers. However for followers of Father Mathew, it seems that a belief in his miraculous abilities was a large factor in his support as opposed to a strong commitment to temperance.

In 1841 the BTAA along with the Lisburn Total Abstinence Society invited Father Mathew to give an address in Banbridge.<sup>93</sup> The meeting was held in Co Down due to issues of space and travel. However as the BTAA was involved in organising the event this challenges Paul Townend's argument that the crusade had no effect in Co Antrim.<sup>94</sup> Previous to the meeting there were reports 'circulated with respect to Father Mathew

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<sup>89</sup> Malcolm, p.96.

<sup>90</sup> Anonymous, *An Accurate Report of the Proceedings of the Very Rev. Theobald Mathew in Dublin* (Dublin: n.p. 1840), p.19.

<sup>91</sup> Kerrigan, p.20.

<sup>92</sup> Mr. and Mrs. S.C. Hall, *Ireland: Its Scenery, Character, etc*, 3 (London: n.p. 1841-43), p.42-43.

<sup>93</sup> *BNL*, 25 June 1841.

<sup>94</sup> Paul Townend, *Father Mathew, Temperance and Irish Identity* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2002), pp.213-324.



giving sight to the blind, making the dumb speak and the lame to walk'.<sup>95</sup> The *Belfast News-Letter* reported that three to five thousand people attended this meeting in order to receive the pledge from Father Mathew.<sup>96</sup> The meeting was to be held in the 'new Chapel, but the concourse of people was so vast as entirely to preclude the possibility' and it was instead held in a nearby field.<sup>97</sup> The hysteria surrounding Father Mathew's meeting was so intense that it was 'a common thing...to see a cripple carrying his crutches through the field, cheered on by thousands – until at last, he found that necessity of drawing to them again, or quietly retiring to his box.'<sup>98</sup> However according to the report temperance reformers felt that the hysteria was taking away from the point of the meeting. The *Belfast News-Letter* stated

the friends of temperance in general are sorry that the real object of his visit should be so misunderstood and in some cases misrepresented but all considered that it will effect an important change in Banbridge.<sup>99</sup>

Mathew argued that 'intemperance (was) a foul blot upon the character of Irishmen' and encouraged society to turn away from all drink.<sup>100</sup> He believed that the teetotal crusade could improve Ireland by producing a sober and respectable society.<sup>101</sup> Considering the millions of followers the total abstinence movement had in the 1840s, the argument for national improvement through temperance was powerful. At the same time, however, in the 1840s Daniel O'Connell's Repeal Association was fighting for the repeal of the 1800 Act of Union and the restoration of a separate Irish parliament.<sup>102</sup> As a result arguments, which spoke to national advancement through the development of a sober and respectable citizenship, became problematic against the backdrop of the growing Nationalist movement in Ireland. An overlap between members of Mathew's total abstinence societies

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<sup>95</sup> *BNL*, 25 June 1841.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> Anon, *An Accurate Report*, p.19.

<sup>101</sup> Kearney, pp.164-175.

<sup>102</sup> Connelly, p.506.

and Daniel O'Connell's repeal association meant that the teetotal movement became linked to Irish Nationalism.<sup>103</sup> Mathew was uncomfortable with this link and stressed that his movement was 'not a sectarian or political society; it had nothing whatever to do with such matters; it embraced members of every creed and of every shade of politics.'<sup>104</sup>

Due to the Catholic and nationalist associations to Mathew's movement, Malcolm argues that Protestants who supported total abstinence were 'unwilling to take their pledge from him personally or to enrol themselves in societies led by Catholic clergy.'<sup>105</sup> This suggests there was sectarian division within the movement and a lack of co-operation across the religious divide. However, there is some evidence to suggest this was not the case. In a public address to Father Mathew from the Belfast and Lisburn Total Abstinence Associations in 1841 teetotallers in Ulster demonstrated that they were not deterred from bringing Mathew's temperance crusade to Ulster. The letter stated

We bless God that this is a cause free from sect and party; that it is a great national question, calculated to be beneficial to all, in its sublime bearings, and injurious to none. We rejoice that, without compromising either our political or religious principles (for we would never yield to such a compromise), we are enabled to come here, to meet you on your first near approach to our towns, and with our whole hearts to welcome you, as the most distinguished and successful advocate of temperance; and, as genuine Irishmen, to present you with a true 'Cead Mille Failte.' You have long had our unmingled approbation, and our entire confidence; and we now come to assure you, personally, that while you continue to act in the same noble and patriotic manner, as you have hitherto done you may rely on our hearty, approved and unwavering support. Your exertions are much needed in Belfast and Lisburn.<sup>106</sup>

Mathew's religious background, his own neutral position and above all his commitment to the teetotal cause was more than enough to engender support from these early Northern temperance advocates. Cross-community temperance activity was not only a possibility during this period but something that was actively encouraged. Underpinning this was a

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<sup>103</sup> Malcolm, 'Temperance and Irish Nationalism', in *Ireland Under the Union: Varieties of Tensions*, ed. by Lyons and Hawkins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p.77.

<sup>104</sup> Anon, *Accurate Report*, p. 20; Quinn, p.548.

<sup>105</sup> Malcolm, p.133.

<sup>106</sup> Cead Mile Failte is an Irish phrase meaning, a hundred thousand welcomes; BNL, 29 June 1841.

dedication to moral reform which superseded any religious rivalry, and a belief that through unity of effort effective change was possible.<sup>107</sup>

By the mid-1840s Father Mathew's movement was beginning to face problems as the movement lacked structure and organisation. By 1844 Mathew had incurred a debt amounting to £7000.<sup>108</sup> Although funds were raised to pay the debt, due to the lack of income it was difficult to maintain the level of activity Mathew had previously reached. Decline was also accelerated by the famine years in Ireland. When people had no means of food, fighting drink seemed irrelevant.<sup>109</sup> Subsequently due to the high levels of emigration in the famine years, Father Mathew wanted to take his crusade to America, which he did in 1849 when he left for an extended lecture tour that lasted two years.<sup>110</sup> As Kerrigan argues, the fact that so much of the impetus for the movement in Ireland had centred on him, decline was inevitable when he was no longer at the front.<sup>111</sup>

Paul Townend argues that the Irish temperance movement never recovered from the decline of Mathew's crusade in the 1840s.<sup>112</sup> However this argument unjustly segregates the Irish temperance movement and ignores the fact that the teetotal movement in Ulster continued to grow in the 1840s and early 1850s. In 1848 a total abstinence procession was led through Belfast. The demonstration consisted of members from the Young Men's Temperance Association, Father Mathew's Benevolent Society, Dr Spratt's Teetotallers and an organisation called the Central Association.<sup>113</sup> Three men – Mr. C Pelling, Mr. A Riddell and Mr. James Haughton, - led the procession. All three of these individuals later became prominent in the ITL. This highlights the links between the ITL and the early total abstinence movement in Ulster. The establishment of the Armagh Total Abstinence Society and the Markethill Society in 1849, followed by the Armagh Juvenile Society in

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<sup>107</sup> BNL, 29 June 1841.

<sup>108</sup> Quinn, p.552.

<sup>109</sup> Kerrigan, p.170; Quinn, p.552.

<sup>110</sup> Quinn, p.552.

<sup>111</sup> Kerrigan, p.174.

<sup>112</sup> Townend, p.259.

<sup>113</sup> BNL, 12 August 1848.

1850 shows that the total abstinence movement was not confined to Belfast. Each year the societies named held an annual demonstration, which travelled from Belfast to Armagh in order to show the strength of the total abstinence movement. Furthermore in 1851 the *Belfast News-Letter* reported that Anne Jane Carlile, the total abstinence advocate from Dublin and founder of the children's temperance movement the Band of Hope, was traveling around Ulster promoting the benefits of a teetotal lifestyle.<sup>114</sup> According to the report, she held a popular and well-attended meeting in New Road Presbyterian School Ballymacarrett, after which many young people took the pledge.<sup>115</sup> In 1851 the BTAA alone stated that they had 16,000 followers.<sup>116</sup> Moreover Bands of Hope were appearing throughout Belfast and Lisburn in 1856 due to the work of the temperance agent Mr. Revel.<sup>117</sup>

Locally based temperance activity, as seen in Ulster during this time, was nothing in comparison to the large national temperance organisations which were appearing in England and Scotland. In 1844 the Scottish Temperance League (STL) was formed which was 'the first national non-denominational society for total abstainers in Scotland.'<sup>118</sup> Logan states that the organisation conducted a broad moral suasion methodology designed to attract as many as possible.<sup>119</sup> In England in 1835 the British Association for the Promotion of Temperance was formed. This organisation intended to be a national body but had a strong northern ethos. Therefore in 1854 the name was changed to the British Temperance League in order to represent its desire to conduct its work throughout the whole country. While starting as a moral suasion organisation the BTL increasingly worked in connection with the prohibitionist United Kingdom Alliance (UKA) throughout

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<sup>114</sup> *BNL*, 20 August 1851.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>116</sup> *BNL*, 11 June 1851.

<sup>117</sup> *BNL*, 15 November 1856.

<sup>118</sup> Logan, p.10.

<sup>119</sup> Logan, p.10.

the later nineteenth century.<sup>120</sup> Following this in 1856 the National Temperance League (NTL) was founded following the merger of the London Temperance League and the National Temperance Society. This organisation focused on the method of moral suasion and in particular the promotion of alternative forms of recreation such as tea parties, bazaars and fetes.<sup>121</sup>

### ***Legislation – A New Methodology***

Between 1829 and the early 1850s both moderationists and total abstainers employed moral suasion in the fight against drink. However as discussed in the Introduction, the poverty, crime, and disease still visible in Belfast by the 1850s fuelled a middle-class perception of a problematic drinking culture among the working class. In addition, for total abstainers, who believed that all social ills radiated from the consumption of alcohol, this was proof that moral suasion was futile in rectifying the perceived ‘drink problem’. Some members of the middle and upper classes in Belfast began to express the feeling that if current laws were adhered to properly, this would be sufficient to deal with the issues of intemperance in society. This culminated in a campaign to renew the position of the overseer of public houses in Belfast and marked the introduction of the legislative methodology into the Irish temperance movement.<sup>122</sup>

The overseer position was part of the Church of Ireland’s civic role that provided the Belfast vestry with the power to appoint an individual as an overseer within the parish. It was used in Belfast in the 1840s, however by the 1850s ‘had been over looked for a number of years’.<sup>123</sup> At the Church of Ireland Easter Vestry in Belfast 1853, however, Mr. A. Thornton proposed,

the appointment of twenty respectable men, not of so high a class as to be above the duty, nor of too low a class to evade it, but men who had the interests of morality and the credit of the community at heart and situated in various parts of that town so as to

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<sup>120</sup> Lilian Lewis Shiman, *Crusade Against Drink in Victorian England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1988), p.86-90; Harrison, p.43-48.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.

<sup>122</sup> *BNL*, 8 April 1853.

<sup>123</sup> *BNL*, 30 March 1853.

have each an opportunity of observing the state of his own district, to keep up a surveillance over the public-houses.’<sup>124</sup>

There was unanimous support for this motion and it was quickly passed. Thornton moved that ‘a large committee be formed who would act upon the recommendations of overseers and take steps to reduce the number of public houses’.<sup>125</sup> The first meeting of the new overseers of public houses in Belfast was held on 8 April 1853. According to reports the overseer committee stated

As to the mode of carrying our great objective ...the law (has) pointed that out plainly and unmistakably. It directed that notice be served on churchwardens when a person applied for a license and they were authorised to inquire into the character of the applicant and reject his application if they thought he was an unfit character.<sup>126</sup>

The law referred to was the 1852 Sale of Beer Act, which required any

person intending to apply for a license to produce a certificate signed by six people residing in the parish to prove the good character of the applicant. Furthermore this was then to be signed off by the ‘overseers of the parish, townships or place’.<sup>127</sup>

Thus overseers supervised public houses on a Saturday night and a Sunday to make sure publicans adhered to the regulations set and were running their establishments in an appropriate manner. Anyone found in contempt of legislation was liable to have his licence refused when it came to the time for renewal. The Forbes McKenzie Act had already been passed in Scotland. It was introduced into Parliament by Conservative MP and temperance reformer Mr. William Forbes McKenzie. The act, passed in April 1853, forced the closure of pubs in Scotland on Sundays. Following this enactment there was a precedent set for legislative control of intemperance on a Sunday.<sup>128</sup> Therefore the passing of a ground breaking act in Scotland which controlled drinking and protected the Sabbath Day most likely encouraged authorities in Ulster to support similar ventures.

However the overseers did not have the power to issue official rejections or closures. They could only make recommendations to those who did have the power to make such

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<sup>124</sup> *BNL*, 8 April 1853.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>128</sup> Logan, p.99.

calls such as the local magistrates. Initially members of the committee themselves are reported to have ‘shrunk at the idea of having to prowl the public houses...in the dead of night, or on the Sabbath day’.<sup>129</sup> Thus on 1 July 1853 the overseer movement sent a deputation to the Belfast Town Council in order to ‘solicit that body for aid to carry out their views in a legal and peaceful manner.’<sup>130</sup> That there was general support among the official governance of Belfast for the overseer movement was evidenced by a resolution passed in May 1853. This stated that,

five constables should be placed at the disposal of the overseers of public houses, to be employed by them in enforcing the laws relative to the orderly state of such places of public resort on Saturday night and Sunday morning and evenings, and the constable shall be paid one days wage for such time as they are employed.<sup>131</sup>

While the movement originating within the Church of Ireland, the movement as a whole received support from some quarters within Presbyterianism. In addition to St Anne’s Parish Church, monthly meetings of the overseers of public houses were also held in the Presbyterian churches at Berry Street and Academy Street throughout 1853.<sup>132</sup> Mayne, who was a Presbyterian, was one of the first twenty individuals appointed to the position.<sup>133</sup> In addition, Presbyterian clergy including Rev Hugh Hanna and Rev William Johnston, Townsend Street Presbyterian Church, while they were not overseers, were involved in the movement and regularly attended meetings.<sup>134</sup> These individuals had been commenting on the rise of drunkenness in Belfast in the 1850s, and were actively involved in the temperance movement. By 1854 the overseer of public houses movement was functioning independent of the Church of Ireland. At the Easter Vestry in 1854 it was stated that the

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<sup>129</sup> *BNL*, 8 April 1853.

<sup>130</sup> *BNL*, 1 July 1853.

<sup>131</sup> *BNL*, 4 May 1853.

<sup>132</sup> *BNL*, 8 April 1853; *BNL*, 1 July 1853.

<sup>133</sup> *BNL*, 30 March 1853.

<sup>134</sup> *BNL*, 1 July 1853.

intention (was) that in future...overseers shall be appointed by the magistrates, in whom lies the power of doing so, and who are unquestionably the parties best qualified to select such functionaries.<sup>135</sup>

Reformers who had become dissatisfied by contemporary regulations regarding public houses appropriated the overseer position. The revival of this position reflects resourceful individuals in Belfast utilizing provision set out by church and state to fight what they perceived as the failings of the current temperance movement. It also reflects a growing belief in Belfast that temperance, in the form of moral suasion, was not doing enough to enact change in society.

It is suggested that during the two years the overseer movement was in operation, it was responsible for closing 200 drinking establishments in Belfast.<sup>136</sup> Yet despite results and enthusiastic support from the middle classes the overseer movement seems to have lasted for a short period. The *Belfast News-Letter* indicated that by 1854 it only had the support of Berry Street congregation and a few others.<sup>137</sup> The causes for this rapid disintegration are unclear. Some overseers expressed opinions on alcohol control which extended far beyond sabbatarianism and may have been regarded as too radical for many in Belfast in 1853. For example at a meeting on the 16 May 1853 Mr. A Thornton stated that

the principle reason why the overseers have been called together on the present occasion was that a petition to Parliament might be adopted by them, for the purpose of inducing some alteration in the law, so as it enable them to meet the evils of the case with a better chance of success.<sup>138</sup>

Prohibitionists and the ITL advanced these arguments later in the decade but their 'introduction' at this meeting in 1853 marks the point when temperance language began to change in Belfast and include legislative aspirations. The overseer movement signified the roots of the prohibition movement in Ireland. It demonstrates that there was a long-standing history in Belfast of temperance reformers, utilising the legislative in order to

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<sup>135</sup> *BNL*, 17 April 1854.

<sup>136</sup> *BNL*, 15 September 1853.

<sup>137</sup> *BNL*, 8 April 1853.

<sup>138</sup> *BNL*, 16 May 1853.



bring about moral reform. However it was the formation of the United Kingdom Alliance (UKA) in Manchester in 1853 that marked the start of the official prohibitionist movement in Britain.

The UKA was strongest in the north of England. Considering this was an industrial region, predominance there is not surprising. While they did maintain a small presence in London, they struggled to gain support due to the existence of the British Temperance League and the National Temperance League, both of which had adopted a focus on a moral suasion methodology at this point.<sup>139</sup> The UKA's primary aim was the 'total and immediate suppression of the liquor traffic.'<sup>140</sup> The granting of the Maine Law in America in 1851 was highlighted as the source of the UKA's influence.<sup>141</sup> The Maine Law 'prohibited the sale of all alcoholic beverages except for 'medicinal, mechanical or manufacturing purposes.'<sup>142</sup> From 1853 the Alliance aimed to get the same legislation passed in Britain.<sup>143</sup> According to Shiman the UKA quickly became established as the leading voice for temperance legislation. Thus all of the UKA's legislative policies radiated from their headquarters in Manchester.<sup>144</sup> The UKA used agents in order to form auxiliary societies throughout Britain.<sup>145</sup> These agents were effectively the vessel through which the party line was carried. Auxiliaries had to stick to this despite possible different local circumstance.<sup>146</sup> According to Shiman, auxiliaries 'were only active when the Alliance was conducting a campaign requiring public agitation.'<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Harrison, pp.196-218.

<sup>140</sup> *BNL*, 9 January 1854.

<sup>141</sup> *Daily News*, 28 October 1853.

<sup>142</sup> Henry Stephen Club, *The Maine Liquor Law: Its Origin, History, and Results, Including a Life of Hon. Neal Dow* (Maine: Maine Law Statistical Society, 1856).

<sup>143</sup> Harrison, p.196.

<sup>144</sup> Shiman, *Crusade Against Drink in Victorian England*, p.84.

<sup>145</sup> Shiman, p.84.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid*, p.76.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid*, p.84.

In 1854 Mr. J.H. Raper, parliamentary agent for the UKA, formed the first Belfast Auxiliary.<sup>148</sup> Its inaugural meeting was held in Victoria Hall on Monday 9 January. Plans however had been in place since November 1853 to bring the principles of the UKA to Belfast and inaugurate it into Ireland.<sup>149</sup> It was this meeting that marked the start of the official prohibition movement in Ireland. The Belfast auxiliary was quickly followed by the formation of branches in Dublin and Armagh in 1854.<sup>150</sup> The lists of those in attendance at the Belfast meetings included Rev William Johnston, Mr. James Haughton, Rev James Morgan and Mr. J.P. Corry. All of these individuals had been leaders in the previous phases of the temperance movement in Ireland. In the 1850s they all became instrumental in the formation and success of the ITL. But now in 1854, they were supported by a broad cross-section of the local elite including members of the clergy, politicians, the army, business and medical professions. This demonstrates that, as in England, the driving force for prohibition in Ireland ‘came from above rather than below’.<sup>151</sup> The *Belfast News-Letter* reported that at this inaugural ‘a large majority consisted of tradesmen and mechanics and the crush was so great that policemen were, at one time, employed to prevent any more entering the room.’<sup>152</sup> No one from a working class background spoke at the meetings, so it is impossible to know if their motives for attending came from support for prohibition, a desire to mitigate excessive drinking in the local area, or simply a curiosity about a new movement. Regardless, the sentiments expressed in the article suggest that the large and varied crowd was taken as widespread public support for prohibition.<sup>153</sup> Exaggeration of public support was a common tactic throughout the temperance and prohibition movement.<sup>154</sup> However, the attendance of the

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<sup>148</sup> *BNL*, 9 January 1854.

<sup>149</sup> *BNL*, 11 November 1853.

<sup>150</sup> *BNL*, 1 February 1854.

<sup>151</sup> Harrison, p.239.

<sup>152</sup> *BNL*, 9 January 1854.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> Harrison, p.223.

lower classes at such meetings no doubt enhanced the prohibitionist belief that everyday working people wanted legislation to remove temptation from their path.<sup>155</sup>

It was not just total abstainers who were present at the UKA and Maine Law meetings in Belfast in the 1850s. As James Haughton wrote to the *Freemans Journal*,

The society is not confined to teetotallers – it is open to all who feel the necessity of some decisive action to arrest the crime and demoralisation produced by our drinking customs.<sup>156</sup>

As was common during the moral suasion period, both moderationists and total abstainers often worked in connection with one another during the early phase of legislative temperance in Ulster. The Mayor of Belfast Mr. F.H. Lewis and even Rev Edgar attended UKA and Maine Law meetings to discussed the necessity of such legislation. Both were committed moderationists and freely admitted this. The Mayor of Belfast regarded moderate drinking as a ‘social and friendly intercourse which he himself had frequently enjoyed and which he yet hoped to enjoy.’<sup>157</sup> While some moderationists were willing to consider a degree of legislative control of the drink traffic they fundamentally differed from total abstainers on the extent of the legislation they were willing to see enacted. Typically moderationists believed that partial legislation in the form of Sunday closing was a more realistic aim.<sup>158</sup> However in 1854 prohibitionists were unwavering in their aims; legislation was to be all or nothing. Thus as there was no common cause common cause meetings were often disrupted by disagreements. That their basic ethos and goals were profoundly different was the central issue when reformers from the different styles of temperance attempted to work together.

The radical aim and the uncompromising position of prohibitionists began to attract opposition. On the 6 March 1854, Mr. George Pepper, a solicitor from Portadown who was

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<sup>155</sup> *BNL*, 6 February 1854.

<sup>156</sup> *Freemans Journal*, 23 November 1853.

<sup>157</sup> *BNL*, 9 January 1854.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid*.

secretary of the Belfast Auxiliary of the UKA, published a death threat that he had recently received. The letter stated

you seem to exult in your hopeless task of persecution against the majority of the community, this note is to inform you and give you timely a notice that if you continue you will, as sure as God is in Heaven, meet your fate sooner or later. Only for you – you wretched imp, there would be none of this agitation going on: but you will rue it when you get your head in your hand. Don't think that this is mere puffing, but it will happen if you do not desist.<sup>159</sup>

The letter was signed from 'A Publican'.<sup>160</sup> The anger is understandable as the prohibition movement was aimed at the destruction of publicans' livelihood which was generally considered a respectable trade and profession.

In England, opposition to the prohibition movement was a factor in the Hyde Park riots in London in 1855. Starting out as a protest against the Sunday Trading Bill 1855 and 'evangelical restrictions on popular recreation' the protest soon descended into chaos.<sup>161</sup> Belfast in the late 1850s however was plagued with religious and sectarian riots.<sup>162</sup> Therefore temperance legislation paled in comparison and it is easy to see why it never became as contentious in Belfast at this time. The letter however serves to illustrate that while it was not as provocative as in England, there was still a strong level of resistance to the prohibition movement in Ireland. The *Northern Whig*, the *Mercury*, and the *Ulsterman* were the three main newspapers in Belfast opposed to the prohibition movement in the 1850s. However even the *Belfast News-Letter*, which became an avid supporter of the ITL and by extension supported prohibition, was debating the ethics of legal suppression in 1856.<sup>163</sup> Public opinion at the time largely felt that the current legislative elements in place had done enough to punish those who disobeyed 'the wise and necessary instructions which [were] imposed for the preservation of the peace and prosperity of the

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<sup>159</sup> *BNL*, 6 March 1854.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>161</sup> Harrison, p.244.

<sup>162</sup> Mark Doyle, *Fighting Like the Devil for the Sake of God, Protestants, Catholics and the Origins of Violence in Victorian Belfast* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

<sup>163</sup> *BNL*, 9 October 1854.

community.’<sup>164</sup> Anything other than the ‘ordinary protection of society against the mischievous consequences attending the illegal sale of spirituous drinks’ would have been ‘dangerously infringing the liberties of the public.’<sup>165</sup> Moderationists who supported legislative aims felt that prohibition was a step too far. Partial legislation was as far as they were currently willing to go. The Mayor of Belfast stated

There were many who would wish them well, but who would nevertheless hesitate before they would ruin a hard-working and industrious man, who supports himself and his family in comfort and respect.<sup>166</sup>

Prohibitionists in Belfast however did not share the same sentiment. They felt that such individuals had ‘lost their respectability by their business habits and associates’.<sup>167</sup> In the eyes of the prohibitionists, publicans ‘must be prepared either to give up the traffic, or give up, before the bar of enlightened public opinion, their power and respectability.’<sup>168</sup> However publicans did not give up their position as easily as prohibitionists had hoped. According to Fionnuala Waldron, publicans’ need to ‘defend their economic interest from the threat posed by the temperance movement’ caused them also to become ‘embedded in local and municipal governance from the mid-century onwards.’<sup>169</sup> Therefore the counterattack from the drink trade made it increasingly difficult for prohibitionists to get restrictive legislation passed.

According to the Belfast auxiliary of the UKA

the Alliance was not properly a total abstinence society, for its object was merely to prohibit the sale and traffic in intoxicating drink, though it was a decided movement in favour of teetotalism, and had been warmly sustained by the promoters of the temperance reformation.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> BNL, 9 October 1854.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid.

<sup>166</sup> BNL, 1 January 1854.

<sup>167</sup> BNL, 6 February 1854.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> F. Waldron, ‘A Triumph of Publicanism, Dublin Licensed Vintners in the Late Nineteenth Century; Identity, Interest and Power’ (PhD Thesis, UCD, 2007), p.76.

<sup>170</sup> BNL, 9 January 1854.

This was the official party line as the Alliance described themselves as a political party and not a temperance organisation.<sup>171</sup> At the time temperance was synonymous with moral suasion, and the target was decisively the drinker. Prohibition was aimed at the drink trade and thus initially regarded as outside the bounds of the official temperance movement.

However the majority of prohibitionists were total abstainers who had become dissatisfied with attempts at moral suasion.<sup>172</sup> Rev James Morgan an early moderationist, but now a stern teetotaler and budding prohibitionist, articulated these feelings in Ireland. He stated

Temperance and abstinence societies have done much good, but the great national sin of drunkenness continues in spite of all efforts. Appetite is stronger than reason, and a depraved taste will withstand the most cogent arguments. Something more needs to be done than had yet been attempted, and when legal restraint is proposed, it seems to me defensible on many grounds.<sup>173</sup>

In a similar vein, Rev William Johnston when defending the prohibition movement stated

Moral suasion in the temperance and total abstinence movement has prepared the way for this movement, and we are determined to employ and extend moral suasion until they would make this ‘the people’s question’, and create such a public opinion that they would constrain the Legislature to pass the Liquor Law as the people law.<sup>174</sup>

Malcolm argues that prohibition ‘offered a new tactic and renewed hope’ to temperance reformers who were dissatisfied with the current movement.<sup>175</sup> The growing belief that the current approach to temperance was insufficient explains why prohibitionist ideals were increasingly integrated into the existing total abstinence movement. It also reflects the growth of a radical attitude within the Irish temperance movement and demonstrates that this attitude was to be found in the Irish movement before the appearance of the ITL in 1858. Individuals such as Haughton and Johnston strongly believed that the ‘welfare of humanity could be progressively improved by the application of enlightened policies.’<sup>176</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Shiman, p.81.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> *BNL*, 9 January 1854.

<sup>174</sup> *BNL*, 6 February 1854.

<sup>175</sup> Malcolm, p.205.

<sup>176</sup> “James Haughton,” by Frances Clark and James Quinn, accessed 12 October 2015, [www.dib.cambridge.org](http://www.dib.cambridge.org).

They exemplified prohibitionist support in Ireland. This demonstrates that it was ITL members who were at the forefront of the temperance movement each time it transitioned into a new stage. However in the early 1850s by refusing to conform to norms, these individuals represented the atypical temperance reformer.

Between 1853 and 1857 the UKA continued to fight for prohibition in Britain.<sup>177</sup> However the overall shortcomings of the Maine Law had been widely covered in the British press. In the Belfast papers, reports on its failure typically came from individuals who had received communication from relations living in the United States. In March 1857, Mr. S. Watson published a letter from his cousin, Mr. Joseph Barker, a supporter of the Maine Law who had emigrated to America seven years previously. Barker stated: 'The Maine law is a failure in America, and nothing but moral suasion will make a people, sober, good, and happy, either here or in any other country.'<sup>178</sup> Prohibition remained the UKA's end goal, however according to Shiman, the negative publicity attached to the Maine Law hurt the British prohibition movement.<sup>179</sup> The UKA was forced to acknowledge its 'lack of progress.'<sup>180</sup> After 1857 they had no choice but to compromise and fight for more realistic goals. Following this, the Alliance used the support they had already generated into support for partial legislation.<sup>181</sup> The UKAs fight then turned to the Permissive Bill, which aimed to place the decision for regulating the drink traffic in any area in the hands of local voters. After this the desire for legislative suppression stopped being the call of marginalised reformers and increasingly became the will of an influential majority.

The meetings, lectures and correspondence dealing with prohibition in the Irish press in the 1850s show that there was a level of support for this means of controlling the drink trade. In addition to the movement in Belfast, the Dublin auxiliary of the UKA was

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<sup>177</sup> Harrison, p.196.

<sup>178</sup> *BNL*, 27 May 1857, the letter quoted from is dated March 1857.

<sup>179</sup> Shiman, p.82.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid*, p.83; Harrison, p.198.

extremely active and they had regular meetings and lectures in the 1850s. At a meeting in 1856 both Mr. Samuel Pope and Dr F. Lees, two of the main prohibitionists in England, were in attendance.<sup>182</sup> However, the Belfast auxiliary on the other hand was failing to meet the expectations of their supporters. One individual in particular wrote to the *Belfast News-Letter* in May 1854 to complain about the ‘total want of any information lately on the working of the Maine Liquor Law.’<sup>183</sup> They went on to state that information was necessary, as ‘the public mind requires to be enlightened on any great movement before it heartily co-operates in it’.<sup>184</sup> In addition the author of the threatening letter in 1853 was seemingly correct in stating that the prohibition movement in Belfast was due to the work of Mr. Pepper. Pepper left Ireland in 1854, and it was after this that the prohibition movement in Ulster became stagnant.<sup>185</sup> Between March 1854 and September 1857, there were still rumblings of a prohibition movement. A small number of articles discussed the pros and cons of prohibition; a number of meetings were held and some letters expressing the need for a Maine Law in Ireland were published. However these were minimal and the movement at this stage had no direction.

Despite numerous attempts to enact change, middle-class temperance reformers continued to feel that there were insufficient measures in place to adequately control the drinks trade and drinking habits. In 1856 Alexander S. Mayne and Rev William Johnston published letters in the *Belfast News-Letter* pleading for a more effective temperance movement in Ulster. Mayne argued that by the use of alcohol ‘poverty vice and crime are everywhere extended.’<sup>186</sup> Temperance reformers, particularly those who believed in total abstinence believed that drunkenness was the cause of all other social problems. It was viewed as a barrier to increasing the respectability of the poor and an obstacle to their

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<sup>182</sup> *Freemans Journal*, 23 June 1856.

<sup>183</sup> *BNL*, 27 March 1854.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>185</sup> *BNL*, 27 April 1854.

<sup>186</sup> *BNL*, 26 January 1856.



assimilation into mainstream society.<sup>187</sup> What is more by the mid-1850s the statistics began to reflect the concerns of temperance reformers. The government published statistics detailing the number of arrests for drunkenness in every county in Ireland. Between 1850 and 1862 these figures can give us a sense of the reality of the ‘drink problem’ in the years prior to the formation of the League and into the early 1860s. However, they must be used with caution. Because returns only give county totals, it is impossible to get separate figures for Belfast. The number arrests could be a reflection of the presence of police in an areas, and not necessarily the propensity of people in that area drinking to excess. Arrests could also reflect differing opinions on the acceptability or otherwise of public drunkenness, with more tolerant attitudes coming into conflict with those which considered it a crime. Many of these subtleties were lost on temperance reformers, who viewed figures like this at face value. Looking at the statistics for Ulster as whole arrests for drunkenness, despite some expectations, it would seem that between 1850 and 1862 arrests for drunkenness slowly declined (See Appendix 1). It was not a steady decline and in most counties there was an increase in the early to mid-1850s, followed by a reduction from 1856 onwards. This is important, as the increase in 1856 correlates with a significant increase in the total abstinence movement in Ulster. In Co Antrim (which for our purposes we will assume will have included statistic gathered from Belfast) the same trend is found. However it was the significant difference between Co Antrim and the rest of the province which was undoubtedly a cause of concern for temperance reformers in Belfast. Between 1855 and 1857 the number of arrests in Antrim increased, while in the other 8 counties, figures were staying the same or slightly decreasing. This could suggest that Belfast and the emerging city, was causing disproportionate levels of crime.<sup>188</sup> Given that many of the early temperance reformers were from Belfast, the rising crime and drunkenness rates

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<sup>187</sup> Fitzgerald and Lambkin, *Migration in Irish History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.45.

<sup>188</sup> Barrett, p.156.

might reflect a different experience within the town which would explain their anxieties about alcohol and its consumption.

## ***Conclusion***

The temperance movement in Ireland rapidly transitioned from moderation to total abstinence. Between 1829 and 1840s it was common for both moderationists and total abstainers to try to implement drinking reform through the methodology of moral suasion. However by the late 1840s some staunch reformers from both groups began to view moral suasion as a failed attempt to bring about lasting change in Irish society. The movement then incorporated an additional methodology, which attempted to use legislation to transform drinking customs. Thus there were two different styles, and two different methodologies within the Irish temperance movement. There was undeniably a desire for a temperance movement during this time but a considerable lack of unity among reformers meant that there was a lack of organisation and leadership. By the early 1850s the temperance movement in Ireland continued to remain a small sub-culture that had little effect on the majority of society. When compared to the movement in England and Scotland, the Irish total abstinence movement remained locally organized and without a nationally co-ordinated strategy. The UKA, the British Temperance League and the National Temperance League were all large national organisations fighting intemperance in England, and the Scottish Temperance League in addition to those. Subsequently by the late 1850s there was a need for an organisation such as the Irish Temperance League, which would formalise and organise the total abstinence movement. Many of those such as Mayne, Johnston, Morgan and Haughton had been actively involved at the top level of the of the temperance movement prior to the formation of the League and thus embodied the ITL's strong roots within the Irish temperance movement. They were well versed in the strengths and weaknesses of the Irish movement to date and had the connections to wider British organisations. Thus could use the precedent set in terms of running a national body which attempted to unify the fragmented movement. It was these individuals who took the

strengths of the Irish, Scottish and English temperance movements and incorporated them into their organisation which was based on a different approach to the temperance question.

## Chapter Two

### A United Movement?

*Union is strength and when we have such union for one object I hope that the object will ultimately be successful.*

Mr. John Lytle, chairman of the anniversary proceedings of the ITL in 1866

In September 1858 a ‘number of zealous teetotallers’ gathered together and formed a new organisation called the Irish Temperance League.<sup>1</sup> The individuals who formed the League were inspired by the perceived failings within the former structure of the Irish temperance movement. Following this, members devoted their energies to managing an organisation which provided practical solutions to the drink problem through the use of both moral suasion and legislative prohibition. In doing so, as this chapter will argue, the formation of the League changed the structure of the temperance movement in Ireland and by uniting total abstiners from different methodological preferences in a common cause. This chapter, and the ones that follow, will examine the moral suasion, legislative and religious aspects of the League’s work. However, before a thematic analysis of the League’s activity is carried out, it is, necessary to understand the individuals who shaped the ITL. Therefore this chapter starts with a biographical analysis of the core leadership of the ITL between 1858 and 1914. It looks at the hierarchal structure of the League and the location, occupation and denominational affiliations of its members. This chapter will also identify the key ideas, which motivated the core leadership of the League, before moving on to discuss the key objectives which the League worked towards in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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<sup>1</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1866, p.47.

While 1858 is the official start date for the ITL, there is evidence to suggest that it was set up and functioning as a temperance society from as early as 1856.<sup>1</sup> Alexander S. Mayne, the League's first secretary and former colleague of John Edgar's, published a letter in the *Belfast News-Letter* in 1856 calling for the support of temperance reformers in Ulster.

Mayne's letter announced that

Subscriptions and donations from societies, members, and friends of the cause, to employ one or more active agents, will now be received by the treasurer [and] contributions shall be duly acknowledged in the annual report the following year.<sup>2</sup>

It was shown in Chapter One how Mayne took the initiative in inviting Mr. John Hockings to Ireland in order to make temperance more accessible to the working classes. Mayne undertook similar methods his attempts to revitalize the temperance movement in 1856. His letter mirrors in many respects the one Edgar wrote to the same newspaper in 1829, advocating the anti-spirits movement.<sup>3</sup> Both promote Sunday closing, the success of temperance movements in other countries, and the need for reform in Ireland.<sup>4</sup> Edgar's letter brought temperance issues to the public. This started discussions and gained support for the movement, which ultimately led to the formation of the UTS. The only alteration was that Edgar's letter promoted moderation while Mayne's promoted total abstinence. Therefore by choosing a format which had been successful thirty years previously, Mayne revealed that he maintained a level of respect for the precedent set by Edgar, despite their differences.

The letter indicates that several friends of the cause had already proposed to contribute £1 or more annually towards an active society in Ulster. One of those who had promised annual donations was Mrs. Anne Jane Carlile.<sup>5</sup> This shows a degree of early female influence within the formative years of the League, which made them more

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<sup>1</sup> Alexander S. Mayne, 'Reminiscences of a Few Years Temperance Work', in *Fifty Years Ago: Or Erin's Temperance Jubilee: Personal Reminiscences and Historical Notes*, ed. by Fredrick Sherlock (Belfast: n.p. 1897), p.28.

<sup>2</sup> *BNL*, 23 January 1856.

<sup>3</sup> Malcolm, pp.154-155.

<sup>4</sup> *BNL*, 14 August 1829; *BNL*, 23 January 1856.

<sup>5</sup> *BNL*, 23 January 1856.

susceptible to progressive attitude, as made apparent during the women's movement in the later nineteenth century. The appeal for additional financial assistance was successful and shortly after the letter was published Mayne employed Mr. Revel, an American temperance agent.<sup>6</sup> Revel had been working the temperance circuit in Bristol before leaving for Ireland where he hoped he could find employment as a 'temperance, ragged school, or Band of Hope agent.'<sup>7</sup> He had first made contact with the committee of the Belfast Total Abstinence Association (BTAA). However as the organisation had insufficient funds they were unable to assist him and suggested that his only chance of employment would be with Mayne. This lack of funds within the BTAA reinforces the argument that in 1856 the total abstinence movement in Ulster was stagnant.

As well as taking early subscriptions, then, by 1856 Mayne also had an early agent at work in Belfast. These structures put in place at this stage were the basis upon which the ITL was built. By the time the ITL was officially formed in 1858, therefore, its founding members had been developing the organisation for almost two years. As the ITL's first annual meeting was not held until 1860, the League's founding members had almost four years of preparatory work before the ITL prospered.<sup>8</sup> This chapter will now look at the hierarchal structure of the League and give a biographical overview of the individuals who filled its positions. As will be shown compared to the founding members of the UTS, the founding members of the ITL had a strong business character. This points to the secular elements of the League's character, demonstrating that it took a wider approach to the temperance movement rather than an explicitly religious one.

### ***Core Leadership***

Finding details about the ITL's early leadership can be difficult. Sources for the early years of the ITL are sparse. Minute books are only available from the 1870s meaning that information on the core leadership of the ITL in its formative years is light. However a

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<sup>6</sup> Mayne, 'Reminiscences of a few year temperance work', p.21.

<sup>7</sup> *BNL*, 15 November 1856.

<sup>8</sup> *BNL*, 19 January 1860.

detailed list of office bearers and their positions was published in the April 1863 issues of *The Journal*. Extensive details can also be found in the *Irish Temperance League Report Book 1906-1912*. Through the use of these partial ITL sources, in addition to a range of wider material it is possible to develop an overarching view of the core leadership of the League between 1858 and 1914. The President, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer and Secretary, with the members of the executive committee, made up the core leadership of the ITL. The Scottish Temperance League, on which the League was modelled on, also had an elaborate system of ‘Honorary Directors, Vice-Presidents and Executive’ – the ITL was no different.<sup>9</sup>

### Presidents

The President was the most senior position within the ITL. Between 1858 and 1914 the ITL had eighteen presidents (See Table 2.1). Of the eighteen presidents who served during this period, thirteen came from Ulster, while the remainder came from the southern counties of Waterford, Cork, Queens County, and Kerry. Of the eighteen presidents, it is possible to determine the religious affiliation of fourteen individuals; 50% were Presbyterian, 29% were Quaker and 21% were Church of Ireland. The predominance of Presbyterian and Quakers is no surprise considering that both of these denominations were active in the Irish temperance movement from the 1820s. Comparatively, any presidents from the Church of Ireland were clustered in the later part of the period, as this was not an active denomination in the temperance movement until the founding of the Church of Ireland Diocesan Temperance Association in 1876.<sup>10</sup> Sir Algernon Coote, Premier Baronet of Ireland, was the first Anglican president of the League and served between 1903 and 1908. Coote’s presidency highlights the change from the Presbyterian and Quaker character of the ITL in the nineteenth century.

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<sup>9</sup> Logan, p.10.

<sup>10</sup> *BNL*, 5 October 1876.

Name	Year	Occupation	Location	County	Religion	Marital Status
William M Scott, Esq	1858	Engineer	Belfast	Antrim		
J.F Ferguson, Esq	1859	Linen Merchant	Belfast	Antrim	Presbyterian	Married
Sir J. P Corry, Esq	1860 -61	Timber Merchant	Belfast	Antrim	Presbyterian	Married
Marriott Dalway Esq	1862 - 1886	MP	Carrickfergus	Antrim	Presbyterian	Married
John Grubb Richardson Esq	1887 -90	Linen Merchant	Bessbrook	Armagh	Quaker	Married
John Newsom, Esq, JP	1891	Tea and Sugar Merchant	Cork	Cork	Society of Friends	Married
Henry Barcroft Esq	1892	Director of Bessbrook and Newry Tramway Company	Newry	Down	Society of Friends	Married
Ringrose Atkins, Esq, M.D	1893	Doctor	Waterford	Waterford	Church of Ireland	Married
William M. Scott Esq	1894	Engineer	Belfast	Antrim		
Alexander M'Vicker, Esq, JP	1895	R & A Insurance	Derry	Derry		
Lawson A. Browne, Esq	1896	Doctor	Belfast	Antrim		
R M'Cowen Esq, JP	1897		Tralee			
William Johnston, Esq, M.P	1898	MP	Ballykilbeg	Armagh	Presbyterian	Married
James N. Richardson	1899 -	Linen Merchant	Bessbrook	Armagh	Quaker	Married



, Esq, D.L	1900					
Drummond Grant, Esq,	1901 - 1902	Retired	Coleraine	Londonderry	Presbyterian	Widowed
Sir Algernon Coote, Bart, H.M.L	1903 - 1908	Premier Baronet of Ireland	Queens County	Laois	Church of Ireland	Married
John Smith, Esq., M.A., F.C.S	1909 - 1910	Retired flax manager	Banbridge	Down	Church of Ireland	Married
Alfred Beale, Esq	1911	Stock Broker	Cork	Cork	Religious Society of Friends	Widowed
John Malone, Esq	1912 - 1914	Director of Limited Co Flax Spinning	Belfast	Antrim	Presbyterian	Married

**Table 2.1: Presidents of the Irish Temperance League 1858-1914, (Source: *ITLRB*, 1901 and 1911 Census, Belfast Street Directory)**

Of the eighteen presidents between 1858 and 1914, eleven were businessmen, two were MPs, two were retired gentlemen and one was a doctor. Also the presence of Coote indicates that by the early twentieth century the leadership of the ITL also included members of the Irish gentry. Presidents typically held office for between one and five years. The only exception was Mr. Marriott Dalway who remained in the position for twenty-one years. Prior to his presidency in the early 1860s Mr. Dalway gained a reputation as an effective temperance speaker for the ITL. He worked his way up the League's hierarchy and was appointed president in 1865, and remained president until his emigration to Australia in 1886.<sup>11</sup> While serving as ITL president, Mr. Dalway was elected as the Conservative MP for Carrickfergus in 1868 and was described as a man with

<sup>11</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1865, p.79.

‘intuitive sagacity and geniality of spirit.’<sup>12</sup> In a pamphlet printed after his election campaign an anonymous author stated,

In a word, Temperance with him is a very important portion of a social moral system. He evidently proclaims his views because he believes them, and he believes them, not because they are taught by talented men, but because they are founded on the knowledge of the laws of human nature; and because they are in harmony with the soundest philosophy, the purest morality, and the most active benevolence.<sup>13</sup>

Dalway’s views on temperance encapsulated the character of the ITL, which guaranteed his long presidency. It is no coincidence that it was during Dalway’s presidency that the League strengthened and developed its political campaigns.

### Committee

The presidents of the ITL were comprised of professional individuals from the political, medical and business spheres and through their occupations they personified the League’s connections to these wider influential areas. This undoubtedly gave the League a degree of respectability and security that was essential for a voluntary organisation to survive. The day-to-day business of the ITL, however, was under the control of the executive committee which defined and implemented the League’s policies.<sup>14</sup> The president of the League was automatically a member of the executive committee. Section VI of the League’s constitution states,

That the committee shall consist of 12 Members to add to their numbers as circumstances may require. They shall be empowered to conduct the general affairs of the Society (five to form a quorum). Every affiliated Society is entitled to send forward the name of a member to act on the committee.<sup>15</sup>

While this suggests that new committee members would be regularly selected, the continuous reinstatement of previous committee members throughout the period indicates that these executive members were drawn from the pool of high office bearers within the League. In 1860 the first ITL committee had a total of thirteen members (See Table 2.2).

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<sup>12</sup> Anonymous, *Marriot Robert Dalway, Esp., M.P for Carrickfergus. Descriptive and Critical Sketch. By A Literary Photographer* (Carrickfergus: n.p.1869).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1863, p.20.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid, p.13.

Numbers fluctuated throughout the nineteenth century reaching a high of twenty-five in 1889 but settled to an average of nineteen members by the twentieth century.<sup>16</sup> Additionally, from the late 1880s the committee was divided into five sub-committees consisting of: café, coffee stand, finance, publication and educational.<sup>17</sup> Interim sub-committees were formed which reflected contemporary concerns of the League. For example, in 1872 the League formed a committee to look at the work carried out by its temperance agents.<sup>18</sup>

The first meeting of the executive committee was due to take place in 1859 but was postponed until 1860.<sup>19</sup> An article reporting on the ITL's first annual meeting was published in the *Belfast News-Letter* in January 1860. This noted all the names of the League's first committee. Using the Belfast street directories, it has been possible to reconstruct the occupational backgrounds of those who developed and implemented ITL policy in its formative years. Unlike the role of president and vice-presidents, which included individuals from outside Ulster, all members of this 1860 executive committee were from Belfast or based there for work. Being a committee member required a high level of commitment because meetings were held weekly in Belfast. Subsequently issues surrounding travel and transport would have been a factor dictating who could and could not join the committee. Therefore despite the ITL's intentions to be an all-Ireland movement, its own rules gave its executive committee a strong Belfast, and therefore urban focus.

The men on the formative committee of the League came from business backgrounds (see Table 2.2). The predominance of businessmen was a continuous feature of the executive committee of the ITL. In the early twentieth century, employers continued to control the

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<sup>16</sup> PRONI, Minute Book of the Executive Committee of the Irish Temperance League, D2663/A/1, 5 December 1884; *Irish Temperance League Report Book 1906-1912*, (Belfast, 1913), p.4.

<sup>17</sup> Minute Book, 28th January 1889.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 13th December 1872.

<sup>19</sup> Mayne, p.28.

policies and direction of the ITL.<sup>20</sup> In terms of the development of the temperance movement, Hempton and Hill state that ‘the interest of employers in promoting the sobriety of their workforce is self-evident and in Belfast, mill-owners, manufacturers and merchants promoted the cause.’<sup>21</sup> Gillian McIntosh argues that ‘within its formative years the League largely reflected the social anxieties of the merchant class in Belfast.’<sup>22</sup> This argument can be extended past the formative year of the League and into the early decades of the twentieth century.

Name	Occupation
Mr. Adam Thompson	Thread Manufacturer
Mr. Alexander Riddell	Reed Maker
Mr. Alexander S Mayne (Secretary)	Proprietor of Ulster Tract Depository
Mr. Benjamin Benson (Agent)	ITL Agent
Mr. Charles Pelling	Proprietor of Pelling & Co sewed muslin manufactures and commission agent
Mr. Duncan M'Mullan	Horse shoe manufacturer and blacksmith
Mr. J M'Kibben (Secretary)	Coal Merchant
Mr. J R Neill (Treasurer)	Jeweller
Mr. James O'Brian	Agricultural implement manufacturer
Mr. John M'Kibben	Coal Merchant
Mr. John MacKenzie	Damask Designer- Mackenzie and McMullan which was located at the Scotch House, High Street Belfast
Mr. John Pyper	Principal of Belfast Mercantile Academy
Mr. Lawson Annesley Browne	L & T Browne, Timber and sales merchant
Mr. Robert Stevenson	Grain Merchant

**Table 2.2: Names and occupation of the first committee members of the Irish Temperance League in 1860 (Source: *ITL Journal*, February 1863, p.20, Belfast Street Directory).**

By the 1880s there was also a notable increase in the number of medical professionals on

<sup>20</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906 - 1912, 1913.

<sup>21</sup> David Hempton and Myrtle Hill, *Evangelical Protestantism in Ulster Society 1740 – 1890* (London: Routledge, 1992), p.114.

<sup>22</sup> Gillian McIntosh, ‘Providing an Alternative to the Public House: The Irish Temperance League and the Creation of the First Coffee Chain in Belfast in the 1870s’, in *Urban History*, 2 (2012), p.3.

the committee.<sup>23</sup> This no doubt reflected the ITL's determination to forge links with the medical profession and promote scientific arguments for total abstinence.

The religious affiliation of members of the executive committee of the League mirrored that of the presidents and vice-presidents. Thus the most prominent denomination within the committee of the ITL was Presbyterian. By the early twentieth century there were also a significant number of Church of Ireland and Methodist members.<sup>24</sup> As Presbyterianism was the largest denomination in Ulster their majority within an Ulster-based organisation is not surprising. Notably however, members of the clergy were never members of the League's executive committee. This was similar to the Scottish Permissive Bill and Temperance Association (SPBTA) where 'ministers did not hold high office.'<sup>25</sup> While the League actively encouraged the churches and clergy in Ireland to become affiliated with its organisation, the executive committee always remained independent of any single denominational group. As is discussed in Chapter Five this allowed the ITL to adapt to secularization and follow the trajectory of the temperance movement which was transitioning away from overtly religious ideologies.

In the formative years of the League the committee was eager to extend the League's work into the south of Ireland. In 1863 a Mr. T.W. Russell was employed as southern agent of the ITL. Russell was a Presbyterian who was originally from Scotland but had moved to Dungannon, Co Tyrone in 1860. By 1863 he had caught the attention of the League, which was impressed by the energetic manner in which he conducted his position as secretary of the Dungannon Temperance Society.<sup>26</sup> By 1864 he was publishing articles in *The Journal* and maintained his trajectory within the League. In the 1870s Russell

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<sup>23</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906 - 1912, 1913.

<sup>24</sup> "Census of Ireland 1901/1911", The National Archives of Ireland, accessed 15 February 2016, <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie>.

<sup>25</sup> Logan, p.21.

<sup>26</sup> *ITLJ*, September 1863, p.145.

would use the skills he acquired in the temperance movement to fuel his political aspirations.<sup>27</sup>

Following Russell's appointment as southern agent, attempts were made to publish the ITL's northern temperance publication, *The Journal*, in Dublin.<sup>28</sup> The extension of *The Journal* into the south was unsuccessful. Nonetheless the extent of Russell's work led to the formation of the southern branch of the ITL in 1865, with its committee located in Dublin. The report read at the annual meeting that year stated,

As the result of suggestions at our Conference last year, it was resolved to establish a Southern Branch, and appoint another Agent. For this purpose your Committee sent a deputation to Dublin, and invited the co-operation of our friends there, to which they heartily responded. We are happy in being able to state, that the result has been most satisfactory. The Dublin branch is now in full working order, with an excellent committee, an efficient agent, and a great extension of the work in the South.<sup>29</sup>

From the late nineteenth century the League also had a branch office located in Cork.<sup>30</sup> These additional branches were under the control of two committees separate from the northern one. Yet Belfast remained the base of the executive committee and the core of the League, therefore it is on this committee that this dissertation focuses. Nonetheless by having a local body in both Dublin and Cork, the League was able to increase its work and maintain a visible presence in the east and south of Ireland. These local committees reported to the executive committee on the state of the temperance movement in their respective areas, thus allowing for an increasingly refined approach to the temperance movement. This was undoubtedly stronger than exclusively depending on the work of the ITL's southern agent. The development of the League's southern committees in the 1860s demonstrates the organisation's desire to become an all-Ireland movement and to unite temperance reformers under the auspice of the ITL.

Despite this institutional commitment to southern work, Russell was an essential

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<sup>27</sup> "Sir Thomas Wallace Russell", by James Loughlin, accessed 10 May 2016, <http://dib.cambridge.org.queens.ezp1.qub.ac.uk/quicksearch.do>.

<sup>28</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1865, p.75.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>30</sup> Gillian McIntosh, 'Research into the Irish Temperance League Archives' (Report Commissioned by the ITL, Belfast, 2012).

factor in the League's work in Dublin. When Russell left his position in 1869 the League stated that they would have to make arrangements so the work could be continued in Dublin.<sup>31</sup> The lack of references to the Dublin committee after this date suggests that no such arrangements were made. However much of the political agitation for temperance in the later nineteenth century derived from Dublin-based temperance organisations such as the Irish Permissive Bill Association (IPBA) and the Irish Sunday Closing Association (ISCA). Russell was among the core leadership of both of these organisations. Therefore he embodied the strong relationship between Dublin organisations and the executive committee of the ITL, making the need for a Dublin committee redundant. The Cork committee on the other hand was more enduring. This committee was still functioning up until 1912.<sup>32</sup> In the early twentieth century the executive committee of the ITL in Belfast attempted to supersede the southern committees and began holding 'annual southern meetings' in counties Clare, Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford.<sup>33</sup> This was an attempt by the executive committee to move away from the localized approach to the temperance movement that it had maintained since the 1860s. The last reference found to the Cork committee was dated 1912 and presumably it was wound up sometime between this date and the First World War. At a conference in 1916 attempts were made to 'reconstitute the Cork committee of the League', but no such provision seems to have been made.<sup>34</sup>

### Vice-President

Alongside the position of President and committee member, there was also that of vice-president. Generally vice-presidents were not involved in the day-to-day business of the League. Rather they were affluent individuals who acted as ambassadors, providing financial support and advocating the ITL within their local areas. In 1860 the League had

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<sup>31</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1869, p.76.

<sup>32</sup> *ITLRB*, 1912, p.4.

<sup>33</sup> *Killarney Echo and South Kerry Chronicle*, 14 October 1911

<sup>34</sup> *Irish Examiner*, 18 November 1916.

six vice-presidents. This had increased to thirty-five by 1863.<sup>35</sup> In 1906 the number of ITL vice-presidents reached a high of ninety-two.<sup>36</sup> In the formative years of the League, the majority of vice-presidents came from rural Ulster. Between 1860 and 1863 70% of vice-presidents came from small towns such as Holywood, Glenarm and Coleraine. Only a minority came from Belfast. A few isolated VP's came from farther afield, most notably James Haughton, who was from Dublin, and Mr. J.M. Bramford from Edinburgh.<sup>37</sup> In the early twentieth century, individuals from Ulster continued to dominate the position. Of the 71%, 46% were from Belfast while the remainder came from small towns in rural parts of the northern province.<sup>38</sup> The appointment of vice-presidents was another attempt by the League to expand its influence and gain status as an all-Ireland organisation. By giving out titles that required little commitment, the ITL gained representation and presence in remote parts of Ireland. Thus Haughton's example of southern involvement in the ITL was replicated several times over the succeeding decades. By 1912 eighteen vice-presidents came from provinces outside Ulster. The most southerly location where the League attempted to utilize this position was in Co Kerry. The ITL had one affiliated society in Co Kerry, which was run by Rev James Wilson from Killarney Presbyterian Church.<sup>39</sup> In the early twentieth century attempts were made to enhance the League's presence in that county.<sup>40</sup> Jubilee meetings were held in the neighbouring town of Tralee in 1908, followed by a number of public meetings until 1913.<sup>41</sup> In 1910 William Martin Esq, J.P for Co Kerry, was appointed vice-president of the League.<sup>42</sup> Yet aside from a financial donation

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<sup>35</sup> *BNL*, 23 April 1861; *ITLJ*, February 1863, p.20.

<sup>36</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.3.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>39</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.3; "Fasti of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland 1840-1910" by John Barkley, accessed 20 May 2016, <http://www.presbyterianhistoryireland.com/web-resources/minister-lists-fasti/presbyterian-church-in-ireland-1840-1910/>.

<sup>40</sup> *Killarney Echo and South Kerry Chronicle*, 21 November 1908.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 21 November 1908, 11 March 1911, 8 November 1913, 15 November 1913.

<sup>42</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906-1912.



each year, Martin was never present at any of the ITL meetings in his locality. This clearly demonstrated the honorary status of the VP position.

While the position only required minimal commitment, some vice-presidents did carry out work on behalf of the organisation. Many vice-presidents regularly gave speeches on the subject of temperance and maintained the League's presence in their local areas. Notable examples include Mr. E.D. Atkinson, who was the coroner for Co. Armagh and was a vice-president in the 1860s. In 1865 he was described in *The Journal* as 'one of the most staunchest friends of our good cause.'<sup>43</sup> Mr. Atkinson regularly chaired or addressed meetings at temperance organisations in Armagh and as far afield as Larne.<sup>44</sup> Both Haughton and Rev James Morgan, were highly active ITL vice-presidents. In terms of the speeches Haughton gave on the topic of total abstinence and prohibition, and the numerous articles he published in the press, the ITL believed that he 'contributed in a large degree' to changing public opinion about the value of temperance.<sup>45</sup> When Rev Morgan died in 1873, the League committee recorded, the 'deep sense of loss sustained by the temperance movement and the Irish Temperance League by the death of Rev James Morgan DD, long recognized as one of our most influential Vice-Presidents.'<sup>46</sup>

In 1860, none of the vice-presidents of the League were members of the clergy which was a reflection of the distance between the League and organized religion at this stage. Comparatively by 1863, 54% of the ITL's VP positions were filled by ordained religious men. Moreover 63% of the clerical vice-presidents in 1863 were Presbyterian.<sup>47</sup> The changes in the core leadership of the League at this stage were a reflection of the growing support for total abstinence from individual clergy and the effects of the religious revival, which had begun in Ulster in the summer of 1859.<sup>48</sup> As is shown in Chapter Five the ITL

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<sup>43</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1865, p.64.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> Sherlock, p.120.

<sup>46</sup> Minute Book, 9 August 1873.

<sup>47</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1863, p.20; Malcolm, p.136.

<sup>48</sup> *BNL*, 23 April 1861.

and the revival emitted the same rhetoric in terms of the importance of moral reform. Through the desire for visual proof temperance, and the decrease in drinking and crime, became one of the ways in which the revival was measured. This caused more support for temperance and the ITL, which enabled the organisation to prosper during its formative years. Clearly the Ulster revival and the League developed a mutually beneficial relationship.

In the early twentieth century the proportion of clergy among the vice-presidents had decreased to 42%. Simultaneously the proportion of J.Ps increased to 36%. Again similarities are drawn between the Irish and Scottish temperance movements. Logan notes that within the Scottish temperance movement the proportion of clerical vice presidents declined as that of J.P's grew from the late 1890s on.<sup>49</sup> This was a reflection of the increasing secularization of the drink question over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and its growing focus on moral and social reform. The ITL remained a Christian organisation and continued to believe that church involvement in the total abstinence movement was necessary. Therefore connections to the churches in Ireland through clerical members remained important to the League. By the early twentieth century vice-presidents of the ITL represented those in the most senior positions in religious circles. This reflected the Irish church's growing acceptance of total abstinence in this period. In 1906 the Rev William M'Kean, minister of 1<sup>st</sup> Ballymacarrett congregations in Belfast and Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, was listed as a vice-president. Also included was Rev James Robertson, DD from Coleraine, who was the Vice-President of the Methodist Conference.<sup>50</sup> Decorating these individuals with the title of vice-president was the method the League employed to maintain its relationships. The vice-president role was fundamentally a way to honour friends and encourage supporters of the League's work. The list of influential and well-known names within the ITL's vice-

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<sup>49</sup> Logan, p.13.

<sup>50</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.3.

presidents lists gave the League a social status in its formative years. Conversely as the prestige of the League grew throughout the nineteenth century, connections to it provided status and respectability to office holders themselves. The vice-presidency was a mutually beneficial relationship.

The individuals in these core leadership positions show that men dominated the ITL throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Between 1858 and 1914 no women were presidents or on the executive committee of the League, but females were not totally excluded from leadership positions. From the 1890s Mrs. Margaret Byers and Miss A.W. Richardson both served as vice-presidents of the League.<sup>51</sup> Mrs. Byers, who was originally from Co. Down and in 1859 opened the first collegiate school for women in Belfast, was described as an ‘educationalist, suffragist and philanthropist.’<sup>52</sup> Both she and Richardson were involved in the formation of Belfast Ladies Temperance Union (BLTU) in 1862 under the auspice of the ITL.<sup>53</sup> The BLTU aimed to unite all temperance ladies in Belfast, but it was under the control of a predominantly male committee.<sup>54</sup> Byers and Richardson assumed an increasingly central role in the temperance movement in Ireland over the late nineteenth century.<sup>55</sup> In addition they were also involved in the Belfast Women’s Temperance Association (BWTA), which had been formed in 1874. In 1894 Byers suggested that the northern ladies union merge with unions from Cork and Dublin to form the Irish Women’s Temperance Union (IWTU).<sup>56</sup> While the BLTU had been under the auspice of the ITL, the formation of the IWTU represented the evolution of the women’s movement in Ireland. It was now functioning on its own and not under the control of a male committee. Therefore Byers’ and Richardson’s position within the core

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<sup>51</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1896, p.43; *BNL*, 13 Jan 1887.

<sup>52</sup> “Mrs Margaret Byers”, by Frances Clarke, accessed 23 January 2016, <http://dib.cambridge.org>; Jordan, A, *Margaret Byers; Pioneer of Women’s Education and Founder of Victoria College, Belfast* (Belfast: The Institute of Irish Studies, 1980).

<sup>53</sup> *BNL*, 22 April 1862.

<sup>54</sup> *BNL*, 27 September 1862.

<sup>55</sup> *BNL*, 18 May 1876; *BNL*, 13 January 1887.

<sup>56</sup> *BNL*, 12 May 1894.

leadership of the ITL suggests that by the 1890s the women's movement was powerful enough to be considered an important ally for the League. That their position within the League in the 1890s coincides with advancements in the ladies movement was not a coincidence.

As this section has shown, the core leadership of the ITL was a predominately male body, with a strong Ulster character. The central committee of the organisation, which implemented the direction and policies of the ITL mainly encompassed Presbyterian businessmen from Belfast. However despite this, through the formation of committees in Dublin and Cork and the use of honorary titles, the League did attempt to spread the organisation throughout Ireland. Still unexplored, however, is what motivated these individuals to form and manage a temperance organisation?

### ***Motives***

A strong philanthropic culture is identifiable within the members of the core leadership of the ITL. Mr. Lawson Brown, member of the first executive committee of the ITL and president in 1895, was also a vice-president of the City of Belfast YMCA. He also formed Felt Street School and Mission Hall, was involved in philanthropic efforts for working girls and was a member of the Grampian committee, which turned a decommissioned naval ship into a reform school for boys.<sup>57</sup> James Haughton, for instance, was a prominent figure in the Hibernian Anti-Slavery Society and he contributed generous funds to relief societies during the famine years. He was also a vice-president of the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland, active in the Hibernian Peace Society and the British India Society.<sup>58</sup> Mr John Grubb Richardson, is reported to have 'believed since boyhood that it was an employer's sacred duty to look after the welfare of those around him.'<sup>59</sup> Consequently Grubb Richardson built Bessbrook Village for his workers. This was a teetotal area which hoped to 'optimize well-being and social cohesion', and it became the

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<sup>57</sup> *BNL*, 17 June 1872.

<sup>58</sup> "Mr James Haughton".

<sup>59</sup> "Mr John Grubb Richardson", by L Lunney, accessed 21 January 2016, <http://dib.cambridge.org>.

inspiration for other model villages.<sup>60</sup> In addition Richardson was a staunch advocate for national education and gave evidence to a royal commission in 1868.<sup>61</sup> Committee member Sir Robert Anderson, proprietor of Anderson and McAuley Department store, was also president of the Young Men's Christian Association in Belfast for over thirty years. He was also linked to the Samaritan Hospital and the Hospital for Nervous Diseases.<sup>62</sup> As McIntosh argues these individuals concerned themselves with a range of societal ills and strove for better working and living conditions for the working class.<sup>63</sup>

Historians have highlighted a number of possible motivating factors for philanthropic activity. Harrison argues that middle class guilt may have been a motivating factor.<sup>64</sup> This is identifiable within the League. For instance in 1865 Haughton stated that the issue caused by drinking,

seems the more appalling because of the contrast presented by the increasing prosperity of the few, which makes the yet unrevealed discomfort and destitution of the man, the more apparent.<sup>65</sup>

Feelings of guilt also underpinned many of the League's arguments surrounding the perception that moderation gave a level of respectability to drinking customs, which were then imitated by a 'susceptible' working class.<sup>66</sup> Social control is also evoked as a motive for philanthropy. Again many of the League's measures could be viewed in this manner. The benefits that employers could gain from a sober, more reliable workforce are self-explanatory. The League's fight for prohibition could be viewed as an attempt to enforce a middle-class code of behaviour on to the working class populace. Some of the League's members voiced concerns in regards to the growing freedoms the working classes had following an increase in disposable income and leisure time in the late nineteenth century.

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<sup>60</sup> "Mr John Grubb Richardson".

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> *The Northern Standard*, 22 July 1921, Anderson went on to serve as the Mayor of Belfast in 1914.

<sup>63</sup> McIntosh, p.10.

<sup>64</sup> Harrison, 'Philanthropy and the Victorians', in *Victorian Studies*, 9 (1966), pp.358-359.

<sup>65</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1865, p.10.

<sup>66</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1863, p.63.

For instance in 1875 Rev William Magill, vice president of the ITL and Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, equated such freedoms with a lack of supervision and an increase in intemperance and crime in Belfast.<sup>67</sup> Without diaries or other personal statements, it can be difficult to uncover the key factors driving an individual's involvement in the temperance movement and logic would dictate that people were motivated by a range of factors. For those involved in the ITL three factors can be identified as particularly influential.

Firstly members of the core leadership of the League were motivated by the same perceptions of drinking customs that were espoused by total abstiners and prohibitionists in the 1840s and 50s. In other words the League was motivated by the perceived destructive drinking habits of the working class, and the 'negative influences' which radiated from the moderationist culture of the more affluent members of society. For instance in *The Journal* 1864 Mr. Joseph Rainsford, member of the League, wrote

Oh! That the clergy of our churches in Ireland would resolve to give up their one glass in moderation! Which however illogical the excuse, is a salvo to the drunkard's conscience when he takes his own glass, which leads him to two or three or more.<sup>68</sup>

In 1866 James Haughton wrote,

The same wretchedness, and crime, and destitution, against which our father had to contend, still demand of us increasing effort for their removal and such efforts as willingly put forth by numberless benevolent association who find that in spite of all their labours, and their prayers, they are unable to stem the tide of misery and crime which overflows the land...If this unhappy condition of affairs proceeded from causes over which we had no control we should bow in submission to the decrees of a higher power; but this is not the case. Means are within our reach, if not wholly to eradicate, at least greatly to mitigate, the sorrows and the poverty which we can see all around us and which have their origin to a great extent in the drinking usages which is the object of our association.<sup>69</sup>

The 'means' mentioned by Haughton were suggestive of a middle-class obligation to become abstinent, to set an example for the rest of society. Reformers within the League had become dissatisfied with contemporary efforts at temperance reform. They believed

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<sup>67</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1875, p.45.

<sup>68</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1864, p.121.

<sup>69</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1866, p.64.

that the previous structures within the temperance movement had failed to produce the necessary changes in drinking customs. Individuals such as Haughton, Mayne and Morgan personify the evolution of the temperance movement in Ireland. For instance Mr. James Haughton had been a member of the anti-spirits Dublin Temperance Society when it was formed in 1829 and worked closely with Father Mathew during his crusade before joining the League.<sup>70</sup> All three began as moderationists and evolved into prohibition seeking abstainers. Clearly key activists within the ITL who had a serious commitment to the ideals of total abstinence, drove the temperance movement in the nineteenth century.

Secondly, from the League's perspective total abstinence was 'the root of all...social and domestic improvement.'<sup>71</sup> Only commitment to sobriety would mitigate poverty and crime and thus remove the need for any further philanthropic endeavours. The League fundamentally believed that

those who are resting content with curing the disease, or removing the ignorance, or mitigating the poverty, or suppressing the crime produced by intemperance, are only as it were, skimming the moral surface of society, but still leaving in the soil the great root-evil.<sup>72</sup>

The continued arrests for drunkenness, and the crime and poverty still visible in Belfast no doubt enhanced the League's belief in the failings of contemporary reform. Consequently the League expressed a condescending attitude towards other philanthropists whom it viewed as 'benevolent but mistaken individuals.'<sup>73</sup> Therefore the League argued 'until Irishmen of all classes act on the principle of total abstinence, the elevation of our country into a condition of comfort and prosperity will be sought in vain.'<sup>74</sup>

Like other philanthropists, the ITL wanted to remove inappropriate behaviours, which were perceived to be leading individuals, families, and society into destitution. From the League's perspective there was no value in focusing on issues such as poverty and disease

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<sup>70</sup> "Mr. James Haughton".

<sup>71</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1865, p.81.

<sup>72</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1876, p.35.

<sup>73</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1877, p.43.

<sup>74</sup> *ITLJ*, August 1864, p.74.

when alcohol, which the League viewed as the root of all social ills, remained both acceptable and accessible to society.

Thirdly, the core leadership of the ITL were motivated by the desire to modernize society and to change the way people lived. Thus the League attempted to provide practical reform through education, medical research and the provision of an alternative total abstinence culture. Similar ideologies are identifiable in the professional life of some of the core leadership. For instance, Mr. John MacKenzie and Sir Robert Young were partners in Young and MacKenzie, the 'busiest architectural and civil engineering practice of all in Belfast from the late 1870s to 1910.'<sup>75</sup> Both men were vice-presidents of the ITL. Additionally they both served as members of the executive committee.<sup>76</sup> These individuals embodied the overlap between the urban elite and the League. Young and MacKenzie who designed some of the most prestigious buildings in Belfast, sought to bring modern values into their work.<sup>77</sup> According to Paul Harron, 'architects and clients alike sought to create a vision of a place that engaged citizens in new participatory ways.'<sup>78</sup> For these individuals, the new modern society did not include habits of excessive drinking. This mirrors ideologies within the ITL, particularly its moral suasion operations, which attempted to promote a utopian total abstinence society in which everyone could participate.

Fundamentally the core leadership of the ITL were motivated by a progressively more extreme view of temperance and philanthropy and a desire to modernize society. Collectively this rhetoric influenced the core objectives of the ITL in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

### ***Core Objectives***

In its formative years the League had to overcome the stagnant and fragmented state of the temperance movement in Ireland. Therefore the League's basic philosophy

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<sup>75</sup> Paul Harron, 'Big Vision City, Transformation of Belfast' in *Belfast the Emerging City 1850–1914*, ed. by Olwen Purdue (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2012), p.68.

<sup>76</sup> Minute Book, 28 January 1889; *ITLRB*, 1906, p.4.

<sup>77</sup> Harron, 'Big Vision City, Transformation of Belfast', p.69.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, p.68.



stipulated that in order to achieve effective and lasting reform, unity was vital for success.<sup>79</sup> Within this there were three key areas within in which the ITL wanted to promote unity.

Firstly the League sought to unite temperance methodologies. This was reflected in its objective, which aimed for the ‘suppression of drunkenness, by moral suasion, legislative prohibition, and all other lawful means.’<sup>80</sup> The ITL was unique in that it united two methodologies within a single organisation. This approach changed the structure of the Irish temperance movement and appointed one style of temperance, i.e. total abstinence, the identifying feature. This in turn promoted cohesion among all total abstainers, both moral suasionists and legislative, and increased the strength of their movement. For instance the League’s rhetoric stipulated that ‘by combining, as it did, individual duty in the shape of personal abstinence (moral suasion) and social duty in the shape of prohibition (legislation) it was destined to succeed.’<sup>81</sup> In justification of the League’s dual approach ITL member Mr. Robert Lindsay stated

some propose education as the remedy for intemperance, but is every educated man a sober man? Good houses for the poor won’t do what is needed. There is a need of a change of law.<sup>82</sup>

Typically most temperance organisations in this period concentrated on a single strategy. For instance organisations such as the STL and the BTAA focused solely on the method of moral suasion. Others, such as the UKA, followed an exclusively legislative method. While the UKA supported moral suasion it believed temperance of that nature as complementary but separate.<sup>83</sup> Within the existing British temperance movement, moreover, these two methodologies were often in competition with each other. In Scotland the moral suasion STL and the legislative Scottish Permissive Bill Association, formed in

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<sup>79</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1863, p.90.

<sup>80</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1863, p.20.

<sup>81</sup> *BNL*, 29 April 1866.

<sup>82</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1865, p.74.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, p.19.

1858, were in direct competition with each other for money and support.<sup>84</sup> At the Second Social Conference of Temperance Friends held in Glasgow in December 1863, Robert Smith Esq, president of the STL suggested that

By each society, the moral suasion and the legal suasion one, keeping their respective departments, individual abstainers might be members of both societies and the utmost harmony and peace prevail throughout their operations.<sup>85</sup>

While it was conceivable for reformers to be involved in different organisations, it was unprecedented for the one organisation to unite both methodologies. Thus the League's dual method was progressive and anticipated developments within the wider temperance movement in the late nineteenth century. For instance it was not until the 1890s STL developed a legislative committee within its organisation.<sup>86</sup> Yet in the 1850s, those who formed the ITL found themselves in a pioneering position. By the time legislative prohibition was becoming popular within the temperance movement, England and Scotland already had established national moral suasion organisations. Because national organisations had been slower to develop in Ireland temperance reformers there had a unique opportunity to unite methodologies within a single group and mitigate the opposition and competition that had characterized the British temperance movement so far. Notably however total abstinence remained the core of the League. Therefore while unity would align reformers within the teetotal movement it simultaneously cemented battle lines against moderationists.

There were some within the ITL who saw temperance as a religious matter. The League continued to cater for members of this nature and partook in the evangelical culture of the time. From the outset, meetings were opened and closed in prayer in the hope they would 'obtain the blessing of God upon (their) efforts.'<sup>87</sup> Yet the ITL wanted to build a temperance movement built upon practical solutions to the drink problem. The League did

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<sup>84</sup> Logan, p.26.

<sup>85</sup> *ITLJ*, January 1864, p.13.

<sup>86</sup> Logan, pp.10-20.

<sup>87</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1866, p.47.

not believe that prayer was effective enough on its own to ensure lasting change.<sup>88</sup>

Notably, religion is not included as one of its defining objectives. The League believed that abstinence was an individual duty based on a moral responsibility to set an example of good living to others. By leaving religious ideologies out of its objectives the League personalized the extent to which abstinence was a Christian duty and avoided possible denominational divisions and infighting within the organisation. Thus while some took the pledge due to a religious obligation to set an example to their peers, others took it for more secular reasons, such as the detrimental effects on health and wealth. The level of flexibility that this gave the League became increasingly important over the nineteenth and early twentieth century as the medical and social elements of the drink question took precedence over religious philosophies. The relationship between the League and religious ideologies is discussed further in Chapter Five.

Secondly the League wanted to promote unity of effort from all classes in society. From the League's perspective, people at all social levels had a detrimental relationship with alcohol, 'the rich as well as the poor are enslaved by it.'<sup>89</sup> While this ideology was taken from the early total abstinence movement it was vital to the League's work. The League was class blind when it came to the consumption of alcohol. It equated all forms of drinking with a lack of discipline and respect, thus rendering one's social class irrelevant. League rhetoric cut across class lines and maintained that an ideal citizen would have self-respect, self-awareness and self-control.<sup>90</sup> Through these core values individuals would be able to enhance their quality of life. Similar ideas are identifiable in the English temperance movement where sobriety and discipline were promoted as key to self-advancement.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1866, p.64.

<sup>89</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1866, p.64.

<sup>90</sup> Sherlock, p.1.

<sup>91</sup> Robert Duncan, 'Panic Over the Pub? Drink and the First World War' (PhD Thesis, St Andrews University, 2008), p.25.

The League aspired to develop an organisation on a broad basis encompassing moral suasion, legislative prohibition, religious, and secular reformers in a drive for moral and social reform. Thus the final objective of the League was ‘the union of temperance societies and activists in Ireland and the concentration of their moral strength.’<sup>92</sup> Unity between methodologies and the classes, allowed for the consolidation of a broad spectrum of temperance societies under the umbrella of the League in order promote cohesion and strengthen the total abstinence movement.

Membership lists for the formative years of the League are sparse. However a subscription list for April 1863 offers insight into the individual members of the League. Of the forty-one names on the list, thirty-six donated the required amount or more thus becoming members of the League.<sup>93</sup> Unsurprisingly given that these were the formative years of the League, the majority of members were men from Belfast. However the list did include four female members, as well as individuals from Dublin and County Londonderry.<sup>94</sup> Evidently the alliance of temperance societies and reformers was slow during the League’s formative years.

From 1863 the League put in place efforts to open lines of communication between temperance reformers who might not have had the opportunity for dialogue with other like-minded individuals. The League organized a National Conference aimed at bringing together all the different temperance reformers and organisations in Ireland.<sup>95</sup> The League stated that

every society in Ireland should be represented by one delegate or more, so that by mutual counsel and united effort the best plans may be devised and carried out for the furtherance of our common cause.<sup>96</sup>

Evidently this conference was successful and attracted many total abstinence reformers from across Ireland.<sup>97</sup> At the first meeting of the National Conference, the ITL asked James

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<sup>92</sup> *BNL*, 29 April 1862.

<sup>93</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1863, p.20.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *BNL*, 18 April 1863; *ITLJ*, March 1863, p.37.

<sup>96</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1869, p.10.

Haughton to give a lecture on the topic of ‘The Temperance Movement in Ireland, and the Importance of Union’.<sup>98</sup> This was later published in *The Journal*. Haughton stated

I hastily complied with their request, feeling it to be a high honour and great privilege to be called on to take any part in the proceedings of such a Conference, held in Belfast, and called together under the auspices of an Association which has the credit of collecting in one great bond of union many of the weak and scattered Temperance Societies of Ireland, thus giving cohesion and strength to bodies that have been hitherto kept far apart and too much isolated, thereby losing that strength and power for effecting the good purposes in view, which unity of action imparts to large bodies of men—this union, as I understand, not being intended, in the smallest degree, to interfere with the local management of the societies that become thus affiliated, but leaving to them all full liberty to regulate and manage their own affairs in such manner as may seem to themselves best and most suitable to the circumstances of each local Association.<sup>99</sup>

Haughton’s speech demonstrates that a number of local temperance societies predate the formation of the ITL. This reinforces the argument that there was a temperance movement in Ireland prior to 1858, but that it was disorganized and lacking a common cause.

The subscription lists for the early decades of the twentieth century demonstrate the impact of the ITL as an umbrella organisation. While the League continued to be strongest in Ulster, it contained members from every province in Ireland, in addition to a small number in Britain and North America (See Table 2.3).<sup>100</sup>

Location	No. Of Subscriptions	Percentage
Ulster	1619	77.02%
Munster	354	16.84%
Leinster	55	2.62%
Connaught	66	3.14%
England	6	0.29%
Scotland	1	0.05%
Canada	1	0.05%

**Table 2.3: The number and location of subscriptions to the League in 1912, (Source: *Irish Temperance League Report Book, 1912*)**

<sup>97</sup> *BNL*, 14 April 1863.

<sup>98</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1863, p.90.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>100</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906-1912.

Furthermore by 1912 the League had 412 affiliated societies in 284 different locations throughout Ireland. The location of the societies shown in the map overleaf allows for a visual analysis of how successful the League was at becoming an all-Ireland movement (See Figure 2.4). 81% of the societies affiliated with the ITL were located in Ulster, emphasizing the strong northern ethos of the organisation. Within Ulster the majority of these societies came from counties Antrim and Down. The predominance of these counties is not surprising when considering the League's nineteenth century links with industrialization in the north of Ireland, the location of Belfast, and the ITL's religious make up. Nonetheless by 1912, bar Kilkenny, Carlow, Leitrim and Westmeath, the League had at least one affiliated society in every county in Ireland. However the ITL used existing networks within the Protestant churches in Ireland to acquire its all-Ireland impact. As a pan-Protestant movement all of the ITL's affiliated societies throughout Ireland were Protestant in character and/or linked to a local Protestant church.<sup>101</sup> Moreover the League's presence remained small in traditionally Catholic areas, such as the western counties in Connaught. Indisputably this was the province in Ireland where the League was least active and was the only province in which the ITL did not have a committee, hold annual meetings, or have vice-presidents. Even in Co Antrim, where the League had a significant following, a pattern of traditionally Protestant areas is clear. For example, in North Antrim the League had societies in villages such as Armoy, Mosside, and Stranocum. In contrast the League had no affiliated societies in traditionally Catholic areas such as Ballycastle, Cushendall, or Dunloy.<sup>102</sup> By 1912 Ballycastle, Cushendall and Dunloy were nationalist areas as evidenced by the strong ties to the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA).<sup>103</sup> The perceived Catholic and nationalist character in these areas would have been incompatible with the perceived Protestant and unionist character of the

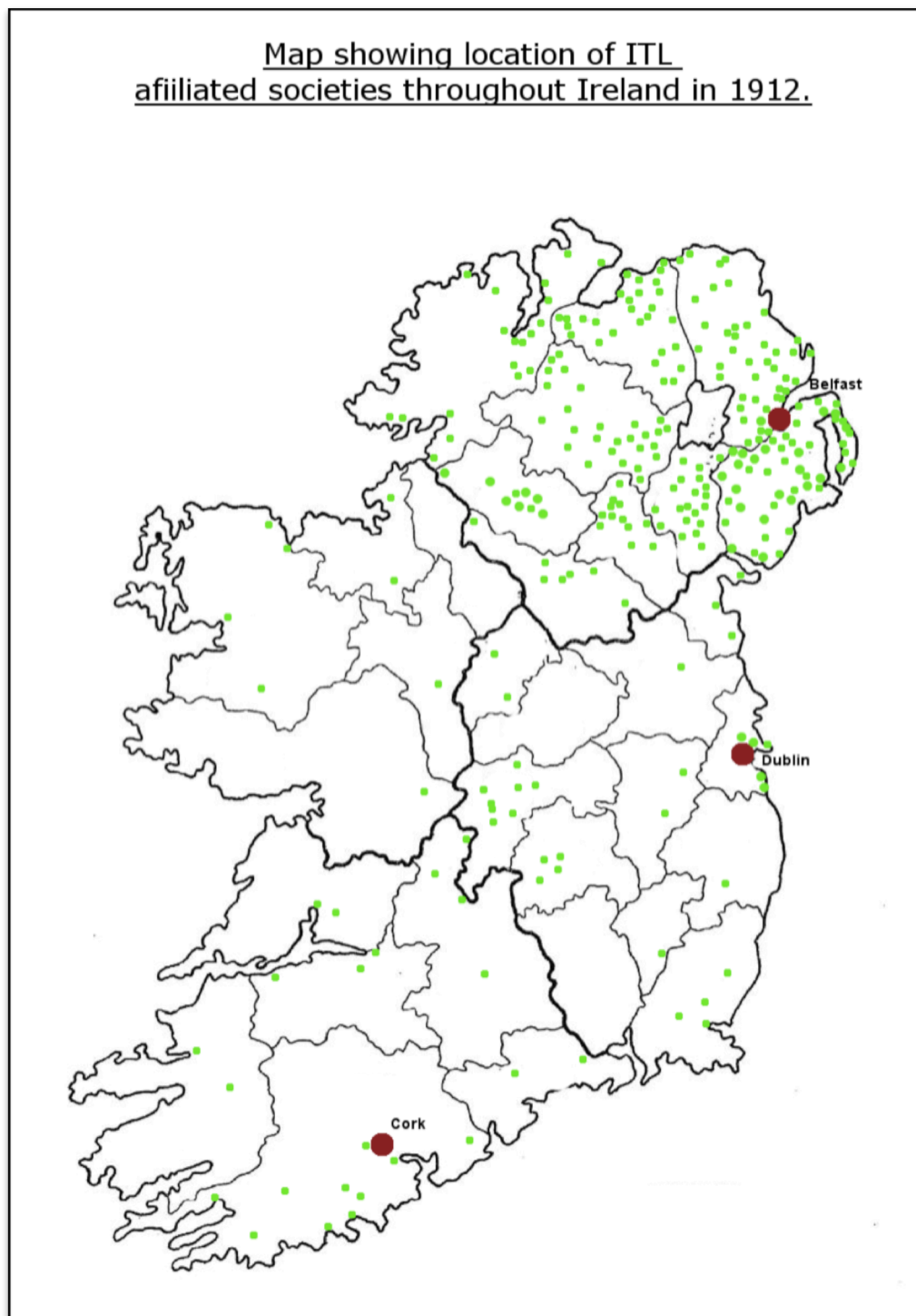
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<sup>101</sup> "National Census of Ireland 1911" accessed 20 June 2016, <http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie/search/>; "Fasti of the General Assembly".

<sup>102</sup> "National Census of Ireland 1911".

<sup>103</sup> Alexander Campbell, *McQuillan G.A.C, A Century with Honour* (Ballycastle: n.p. 2007).

ITL. That being said, despite no affiliated societies or ITL lectures in these areas, the League occasionally received subscriptions from both Ballycastle and Cushendall.<sup>104</sup> These were in connection to the local Church of Ireland or Presbyterian Churches reiterates the pan-Protestant identity of the League.



**Figure 2.4: Map showing location of ITL affiliated societies in 1912 (Source: *ITL Report Book 1912*).**

<sup>104</sup> *ITLRB*, 1912, pp.41-63.

The ITL also demonstrated a determination to forge links with wider British temperance movements. The League held that the perfect temperance organisation would have ‘the high intellect of Scotland, the practical bearing in regard to moral matters of Englishmen and the enthusiasm of the Irish heart’.<sup>105</sup> Thus the League was keen to keep up with wider temperance developments, and from the beginning sought to model its structures and approach along the lines of what was being done elsewhere in the UK. The minutes of the ITL’s first annual meeting state that they were modelled on the Scottish Temperance League (STL).<sup>106</sup> The League used the precedent of the STL to show them how to structure and organize a national temperance organisation. However the ITL did not merely replicate the work of the STL and there is much evidence to indicate that this was, from the outset, a two-way relationship. *The Journal* in 1863 indicates that the ITL subscribed to the *Caledonia* newspaper and the *STL Journal* in order to keep track of the temperance movement in Scotland.<sup>107</sup> Also the minutes from ITL committee meetings indicate that they regularly sent members to meetings of the Scottish Temperance League, The Scottish Permissive Bill and Temperance Association, the United Kingdom Alliance, the British Temperance League, and the National Temperance League.<sup>108</sup> Members of these organisations were also frequent guests and lecturers at ITL meetings between 1858 and 1914. The Parliamentary Agent for the UKA, Mr J.H. Raper, was in regular attendance at ITL meetings until the 1890s. At the League’s annual meeting in 1886 Mr. Raper articulated the growing belief that ‘when the temperance reformers of the three kingdoms showed that they were united it would be impossible to withstand them.’<sup>109</sup>

In the twentieth century the League had corresponding members in New York, Kentucky, and Auckland, New Zealand. These members were listed under ‘Office Bearers’

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<sup>105</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1875, p.26.

<sup>106</sup> *BNL*, 19 January 1860.

<sup>107</sup> *BNL*, 23 April 1864.

<sup>108</sup> *ITLJ*; *ITLRB*; Minute Book.

<sup>109</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1866, p.56.



in the League's reports. This suggests that these were official positions and not simply individual members. Undoubtedly the development of these new positions was to maintain official contact with temperance movements in other countries in order to ensure parallels between their movements. Considering the importance the ITL placed on maintaining relationships with, and learning from, the larger temperance organisations in England and Scotland, it is no surprise then that the ITL wished to do the same with the international temperance movement. Consequently, the support and guidance from larger British and international organisations provided the League with a strong foundational network. This in turn enabled the League to connect the smaller organisation with the international temperance network.

### ***Conclusion***

The members of the core leadership of the ITL were dedicated temperance reformers who were motivated by the perception of drinking customs, the belief that the total abstinence movement was the key to all social and moral reform, and a desire to modernize the way people lived. In comparison to England, and Scotland, the Irish temperance movement was weak, as it did not have a national temperance organisation by the mid-nineteenth century. Yet the founding members of the ITL used this weakness in order to strengthen the Irish temperance movement by forming a national organisation with a dual methodology. Thus the formation of the League in 1858 reflected the vision of progressive individuals who revitalised the structure of the temperance movement in mid-nineteenth century Ireland. This new structure placed emphasis upon cohesion among total abstainers and on unity between the methodologies of moral suasion and legislative prohibition, between the social classes, and religious and secular reformers.

Despite a few exceptions, between the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the ITL was mainly under the control of Presbyterian businessmen from Belfast. Considering Belfast's rapid industrialization it is not surprising that this group was strongly represented within the hierarchy of the League. In this way it was similar to temperance societies in

other industrializing cities in the nineteenth century. For example ‘the leadership of the UKA is usually described in terms of nonconformist, businessmen, often with northern textile interest, and philanthropists’.<sup>110</sup> Yet the League attempted to form a temperance movement that united all temperance activity in Ireland under its umbrella. However in addition to the strongly Belfast-based executive committee, in 1912 81% of affiliated societies, 71% of vice-presidents and 77% of subscriptions all came from Ulster. Clearly despite national aspiration, the ITL was a pan-Protestant movement that struggled to replicated its work to the same degree outside of Ulster.

Even with limitations to the League’s rhetoric, between 1858 and 1914, the organisation worked tirelessly in an attempt to reach its goals. The following chapters in this thesis will show the extent of the League’s work. They take a thematic approach to the moral suasion and legislative branches of the organisation and analyse the objectives that the League worked towards within each area. In 1863 the president of the League, Mr. W.M. Scott, admitted that ‘there were different opinions on the importance of the different aspects of temperance, moral, legislative and religious.’<sup>111</sup> As will be shown, by structuring the organisation in this way and allowing room for personal preference, the League united a wide range of total abstinence reformers under its umbrella.

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<sup>110</sup> Logan, p.20.

<sup>111</sup> Sherlock, p.72.

## Chapter Three

### Moral Suasion

*Do not think your duty done because you have signed the pledge. You have now to try your hand at moral suasion.*

*Irish Temperance League Journal, April 1865*

The League's moral suasion operations used purely persuasive actions in order to attract people to a life of sobriety.<sup>1</sup> Arguments stipulated that man was 'a reasonable, a reasoning, an intelligent, and a responsible being' that could be taught to abandon alcohol.<sup>2</sup> Fundamentally this section of the League's work encompassed an agenda aimed at recruitment and proselytism. Its target was anyone who consumed alcohol and was thus perceived to endorse drinking behaviours and principles within society. As will be shown in this chapter, the ITL employed a dual methodology, incorporating a high and low level strategy. The high-level was the League's professional strategy and dealt with the League's finances, status as a philanthropic organisation and business ventures. The low-level strategy, on the other hand, was the League's outreach strategy. This level dealt with education and the provision of support systems for individuals, which would encourage and maintain commitment to a teetotal lifestyle. This chapter takes a thematic approach to the ITL's moral suasion work in order to demonstrate that this methodology was a significant part of the Irish temperance movement between 1858 and 1914.

#### ***Professional Strategy***

The ITL's professional strategy was a series of actions and activities which provided the organisation with social prestige and financial stability. This was an internal approach directed by the ITL leadership to generate income, and those involved at this level primarily consisted of the League's middle and upper class members. It was inward looking and primarily aimed at strengthening the organisation as opposed to conducting

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<sup>1</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1865, p.1.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

temperance work in the community. Nevertheless without this work, the ITL would not have been able to expand its outreach operations and would not have achieved the longevity it enjoyed.

### Fundraising

It has previously been discussed how, starting in 1856, the League began to collect subscriptions and donations as from an early stage the organisation adopted a proactive approach to fundraising. Unfortunately complete information on the League's funds is not available for the nineteenth century. The partial information which can be taken from *The Journal* and the *Belfast News-Letter* gives an indication of their financial position in the Victorian period.

All of the ITL's operations focused part of their energies on the accumulation of funds. Individual members, and affiliated societies were required to provide an annual donation. Affiliated societies were required to pay an annual fee of £1. Individual members on the other hand were required to pay an annual subscription fee of 2s 6d.<sup>3</sup> This was relatively low and well within the means of the businessmen and professionals who were attracted to the League therefore suggesting an attempt to attract less affluent members of society to the movement. In addition to the required donations, agents regularly collected funds at temperance events. In the 1860s subscriptions and donations never amounted to more than £100 per year. In an attempt to provide security against debt, the Guarantee Fund was inaugurated in the 1870s which attempted to raise £5000 over a five-year period.<sup>4</sup> Agents gave informed speeches about the work carried out by the League and encouraged participants to pledge money to the Fund. It was the responsibility of the agents to collect the said financial pledges. This was clearly an attempt at accumulating more money than that which audience members had in their pockets. However the amount pledged did not equate with the amount collected. For instance in 1872, the League was

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<sup>3</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1865, p.18.

<sup>4</sup> Minute Book, 13 December 1872.

promised a total of £648 12s 6d. However only £74 15s was collected.<sup>5</sup> At the termination of the Guarantee Fund campaign in March 1877 the League stated that its ‘finances were deprived of a powerful support.’<sup>6</sup>

The amount of income generated through fundraising fluctuated. As a result requests for increased funds were frequently found in *The Journal*. These typically followed the same format adopting a confused tone as to why money was not more willingly donated.<sup>7</sup> It was also common for the ITL to use fear tactics in order to maintain the influx of money. The League repeatedly warned followers that services would have to be cut if donations were not increased. For instance in 1866 the League indicated that it would not be able to conduct a number of requested lectures as it had insufficient funds to pay the honorary deputations.<sup>8</sup>

Yet despite its rhetoric, the League was in a position financially to assist less affluent members and societies. For instance a motion was passed at the annual meeting in 1865 to reduce the necessary donation from affiliated societies from £1 to 10s.<sup>9</sup> It was decided that this reduction would be at the discretion of the League’s executive committee when deemed necessary for certain societies.<sup>10</sup> The reason it was able to do this is because it was common for middle-class members to donate over and above their required subscription. For example in February 1862 Mr. J.P. Corry, president of the League, donated £10, followed by £15 in 1863.<sup>11</sup> Clearly this was substantially more than the 2s 6d requirement for individual membership. At the 1862 annual meeting the report indicated that the League was ‘some pounds in debt at present, which they hoped their friends would aid them in paying off.’<sup>12</sup> The League also requested at this meeting that wealthier societies

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<sup>5</sup> Minute Book, 15 March 1877.

<sup>6</sup> Mayne, p.102.

<sup>7</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1864, p.65; *ITLJ*, May 1866, p.34.

<sup>8</sup> *BNL*, 14 May 1866.

<sup>9</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1865, p.20.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> *BNL*, 22 April 1862; *ITLJ*, February 1865, p.18.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

and members would donate more money.<sup>13</sup> This set a precedent in the ITL, which legitimized asking for and receiving substantial, one-off donations from its more affluent members. Enlisting the wealthy was a common aspect of nineteenth century philanthropic work in Ireland as providing societies with funds allowed individuals to fulfil religious obligations to be charitable.<sup>14</sup> Therefore the League relied on the commitment that several wealthy members had to temperance and whom provided substantial donations which kept the organisation functioning in its formative years. This enabled the League to support less affluent societies as its core leadership was secure in the knowledge that its wealthy members would provide financial assistance as and when it was necessary. For instance a report in the *Belfast News-Letter* in 1866 demonstrates how the League utilised its wealthy members as a method of survival within its first ten years. The report stated that a

magnanimous effort was made to raise at once the sum required to liquidate the debt. A number of gentlemen subscribed liberally, and it was confidently expected that the full amount would be raised before the termination of the annual meeting.<sup>15</sup>

By the early decades of the twentieth century the League published its subscription lists monthly. This gave public recognition to those who were funding the cause and presented a clear picture of the extent of the League's fundraising activities, the efficiency of its financial agent, and where, and from whom donations were received.<sup>16</sup> Notably there were still a number of wealthy donors by the early twentieth century, however these were engulfed by the vast amount of individuals paying the required membership fee.<sup>17</sup> Over the course of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries there was a trend towards smaller donations from a larger number of subscribers. Predictably, the majority of subscriptions came from Ulster. For instance in 1912, 77% of subscriptions came from that province

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<sup>13</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1865, p.18.

<sup>14</sup> Joanne McEntee, 'Pecuniary Assistance for Poverty and Emigration; The Politics of Landed Estate Management and Philanthropy in Mid Nineteenth Century Ireland', in *Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland*, ed. by Laurence M Geary and Oonagh Walsh (Dublin: Four Corners Press, 2015), p.115.

<sup>15</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1866, p.53.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, pp.51-77.

alone. In addition, within Ulster 30% of subscriptions came from Belfast.<sup>18</sup> As is shown in Chapter Two, subscriptions and donations came from every province in Ireland, Britain and some from international members. Nonetheless Ulster, and especially Belfast represented the epicentre of the ITL's financial support.

The formation of the business arm of the League from the 1870s provided the organisation with an additional source of finance. Over the course of the 1860s the ITL set up a chain of coffee houses and coffee kiosks, which it operated as a commercial venture. This business did very well and soon began generate a regular source of income upon which the League could depend for financial security. Following this the accumulation of funds through subscriptions and donations was not as vital to the cause as the League implied. Yet the ITL continued to criticize the minimal funds coming into the organisation in this way. Their condescending tone was evident in 1906 when responding to the amount accrued that year. The League stated that

everyone must realise how inadequate this sum is if the organisation is to respond to the many calls which the extending opportunities of work bring to your executive from day to day.<sup>19</sup>

This attitude may be explained in terms of the League's ideological belief in a participatory temperance movement. The core leadership of the ITL envisioned a movement conducted on the principles of 'mutual co-operation' and one in which total abstainers provided for one another.<sup>20</sup> The ITL believed that annual subscriptions should amount to at least £1000, yet their fundraising activities continued to fall short of their rhetoric.<sup>21</sup> The League's annual report in 1908 stated

If all our friends would fully realise that either by increasing their own subscriptions or getting a new subscriber to the League's fund, they would meet all the immediate requirements of the case. Surely they will make this necessary self-sacrifice of money or of time, so that the teaching through public meetings, literature and day school work should continue, and save us from the necessity of reducing our staff or in other

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<sup>18</sup> *ITLRB*, 1912, pp.57- 82.

<sup>19</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.25.

<sup>20</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1865, p.18.

<sup>21</sup> *ITLRB*, 1907, pp.19-20.

ways interfering with our efforts to bring about the sobriety of our people, and save the physical and financial resources of the country.<sup>22</sup>

In all of these communications the ITL promoted a rhetoric of struggle. They routinely portrayed their efforts in terms of imminent collapse in order to increase the pressure on potential donors and to maintain the inflow of mandatory subscriptions, collections, and donations. Research into similar temperance organisations in England indicates that this was a common tactic used throughout the temperance movement.<sup>23</sup> Yet by the early twentieth century the ITL was no longer reliant on this area for income. For instance in 1908, the ITL received £710 1s 9d in subscriptions and donations, in addition to the £600 it received from its coffee house business.<sup>24</sup> The reality was that as a philanthropic organisation the League was generating enough income to cover costs, but it never generated enough to be able to battle what was perceived as the immensity of society's 'drink problem'.

### Professional Connections

Developing connections to the established temperance movement in Britain and Ireland was vital for the League's survival in its formative years. It has been shown in the previous chapter how the founding members of the ITL had been significant members of the Irish temperance movement from 1829. Thus the core leadership of the ITL used its extensive list of contacts in order to develop an all-Ireland network of temperance reformers. This network was strengthened by the ITLs strategic use of honorary titles such as its vice president position.

The ITL believed that the temperance movement could not survive in isolation and it had to work in connection with other influential areas. Temperance individuals promoted the ITL in their areas of respective influence and power, including the churches, parliament and medical circles. These connections allowed the ITL to exert its influence and direct

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<sup>22</sup> *ITLRB*, 1907, p.22-23.

<sup>23</sup> James Clifford Dunn, 'A Force to be Reckoned With? The Temperance Movement and the "Drink Question" 1895 -1933' (PhD thesis, University of Central Lancashire, 1999), p.72.

<sup>24</sup> *ITLRB*, 1908, p.57.



wider attention to the question of total abstinence. For instance Dalway's twenty-year presidency enhanced the ITL's political position. As is shown in Chapter Four, Dalway was at the forefront of the fight for temperance legislation and was named along with Sir Wilfred Lawson as sponsoring the Permissive Bill into Parliament in the early 1870s. In addition despite the indifference of the churches to total abstinence in the nineteenth century, the increasing number of clergy within the ranks of the ITL demonstrated that there was a significant level of support among the clergy. In 1874 Rev William Johnston was the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland and thus he was able to combine his position within the ITL and the Church to persuade the General Assembly to receive a deputation from the League. The League used this opportunity to argue 'that energetic action should be taken in favour of total abstinence and legislative reform 'within the Presbyterian Church'.<sup>25</sup> This clearly demonstrates how the ITL utilised its influential connections in order to advance the total abstinence movement in Ireland.

The accumulation of respectable individuals from a wide range of spheres undoubtedly legitimised the League's position as a reputable organisation. It was this position that the core-leadership of the ITL engaged in order to expand its work. Members of the executive committee used their social position in order to spread the ITL throughout Ireland.<sup>26</sup> At the 1862 annual meeting Mayne stated that the League's

values as a national institution have been acknowledged in the assemblies of the wise and great; and it has attained a rank and status from the vantage ground of which it will henceforth be enabled to direct its operations.<sup>27</sup>

This comment demonstrates the importance that founding members placed upon attaining a prominent national position. However Mayne was secretary of the ITL at the time, therefore the self-praise may reflect a certain level of exaggeration. Nevertheless, the ITL had to maintain the appearance of prestige, in order gain prestige. Harrison states that in England, the 'balls, dinners (and) subscriptions lists...meant that it gave pleasure to and

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<sup>25</sup> Minute Book, 28 May 1874.

<sup>26</sup> Minute Book, 13th December 1872.

<sup>27</sup> *BNL*, 22 April 1862.

sometimes profited the not so poor before it finally filtered down to those in need.’<sup>28</sup> Thus while frequently evoking a financially struggling rhetoric, a significant percentage of the League’s expenses went to lavish meetings. The ITL was participating in culturally accepted behaviours, which enabled it to claim itself as a prestigious temperance group, which led from there into potential wider acceptance and support.

The annual meeting of the ITL is a good example of how these reciprocal benefits of power and status could operate. It was an extravagant affair. Events were typically spread out over two days and comprised an itinerary of dinners, breakfasts, soirees and musical demonstrations.<sup>29</sup> In England annual meetings ‘provided opportunities for charity officials to praise each other’s self-sacrifice and zeal.’<sup>30</sup> The ITL’s annual events expressed similar ideologies. Each year resolution after resolution praised the ‘admirable work’ that individuals within the League had carried out.<sup>31</sup> A typical resolution, this one to Algernon Coote in 1907, declared the ‘best thanks’ of the meeting for his ‘valuable services’ rendered to the temperance movement.<sup>32</sup> Having a member of the Irish gentry presiding over the organisation was a public example of the prestigious position the League had created by the twentieth century.

While annual meetings were open to all individuals who paid the required membership, in 1863 an invitation only dinner, or breakfast, was inaugurated. The event was traditionally held at Mrs. Robinson’s Commercial Temperance Hotel, 82 Donegall Street in Belfast.<sup>33</sup> From the 1870s onward the ITL made use of its central offices and coffee shop located at Lombard Street. This event was used to differentiate between regular members and the more influential members who provided financial assistance, or those who made up the core leadership. In this way the annual dinner, segregated members

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<sup>28</sup> Harrison, p.363.

<sup>29</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1865, p.11; *ITLRB*, 1906 - 1912.

<sup>30</sup> Harrison, p.365.

<sup>31</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.89.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p.91.

<sup>33</sup> “Belfast Street Directory 1863” accessed 20 April 2016, <http://streetdirectories.proni.gov.uk>.

and maintained contemporary social and hierarchal structures within the ITL. These events, which were covered by the local press, read like an attendance list of Belfast's temperance elite at which speeches were delivered praising the work of individuals and prominent temperance societies.<sup>34</sup>

The League also had strong connections to the temperance movement in Britain with a formalized relationship starting in 1862 after which the League became an auxiliary society of the UKA and changed its name to the, Irish Temperance League and Permissive Bill Association. This connection was an important step in the development of the ITL, not least in the £200 per annum provided by the UKA.<sup>35</sup> This funding enabled the League to employ more agents, open central offices in Donegall Street Belfast, and to publish its monthly periodical. While the money donated by the UKA was a temporary arrangement there can be no doubt that it represented the catalyst the League needed in the 1860s to expand its work. Due to its connections, by the late nineteenth century the League had developed a strong position within the British temperance community. For instance in June 1872 the committee received correspondence from the UKA informing them that '250 officers and men of the Channel squadron at present in Belfast were abstainers' and a request was made to provide them with entertainment.<sup>36</sup> Undoubtedly this was in order to protect the individuals within the squadron from any temptations, which they might encounter. The letter demonstrated how connections throughout the total abstinence sub-culture were utilised in order to provide support for its citizens.

By the turn of the century the League had developed formal associations with a number of other total abstinence groups. These included; the Irish National Temperance Executive, the Belfast Temperance Voters Executive, the Londonderry Temperance Council, the International Order of Good Templars, The Independent Order of Rechabites

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<sup>34</sup> *BNL*, 29 March 1866.

<sup>35</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1865, p.11.

<sup>36</sup> Minute Book, 10 August 1872.

(IOR) and the Irish Women's Temperance Union (IWTU).<sup>37</sup> All of these groups were significant temperance organisations in their own right: the League represented the umbrella organisation under which they were united. Personal and professional connections ensured that the League was involved in all temperance operations. This was particularly important in areas where the League felt its work was weak, or in areas which were not a priority within its organisation.

One way the ITL developed its professional networks was through its links to the Irish women's temperance movement. In 1862 it had helped to form the BLTU.<sup>38</sup> It was a common view, within the total abstinence movement, that women had a powerful moral influence, and a stronger piety than their male counterparts.<sup>39</sup> Thus the ITL facilitated the establishment of a female association in order to utilize such strengths as a weapon against intemperance.<sup>40</sup> A significant area of the BLTU's work was visiting the homes of the poor and degraded distributing temperance literature and donating clothes.<sup>41</sup> It carried out work that the ITL did not, but which enabled it to claim this kind of activity within its wider purview. Similarities are found within the actions of the ITL during the fight for Sunday closing in the 1870s. The League placed prominence on the fight for prohibition and not partial legislation such as the Sunday Closing Association (SCA). In the late 1870s there was a surge in support for Sunday Closing. It became increasingly likely that the legislation would be passed. Subsequently through their political connections, the links to the SCA, and their prime position in the Irish temperance movement, the League was quickly at the front of the fight. The way in which the ITL was organized arguably allowed

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<sup>37</sup> *ITLRB*, 1912, pp.74-74.

<sup>38</sup> *BNL*, 22 April 1862.

<sup>39</sup> Margaret Byers, 'The Belfast Women's Temperance Association', in *Fifty Years Ago* ed. by, Fredrick Sherlock (Belfast: n.p.1879), pp.56-57.

<sup>40</sup> Andrea Ebel Brozyna, 'The Cursed Cup Hath Cast her Down': Constructions of Female Piety in Ulster Evangelical Temperance Literature', in *Coming into the Light, The Work, Politics and Religion of Women in Ulster 1840-1940*, ed. by Janice Holmes and Diane Urquhart (Belfast: Queens University, 1994), pp.155 –178.

<sup>41</sup> *BNL*, 27 September 1862; *ITLJ*, March 1866, p.28.

for a level of flexibility uncommon amongst the movement, which enabled it to adjust the extent of its work in certain areas as and when necessary.

The invitation from the largely Protestant Belfast Total Abstinence Association to Father Mathew in 1849, as discussed in Chapter One, highlights the cross community nature of the temperance movement in the mid-nineteenth century and challenges Malcolm's argument that the Irish temperance movement was highly sectarian.<sup>42</sup> In its early years the ITL attempted to build upon the inclusive nature of the temperance movement established by the BTAA. Thus while the League was not prepared to compromise on its Protestant ethos, the organisation did try to reduce elements that might cause sectarian division within the temperance movement. The ITL promoted the rhetoric of a national and non-sectarian organisation. At the National Conference in 1863 the League argued that 'intemperance was not sectarian. No church and no community were without it, and the remedy for drunkenness should be as non-sectarian and universal as was the evil itself.'<sup>43</sup> The League also made attempts to consolidate the antecedents of the Protestant and Catholic temperance movements in Ireland into one fluid movement in order to utilize connections throughout Ireland to the best of its ability.<sup>44</sup><sup>45</sup> In Cork there was interaction between the League's southern agent and a local Catholic temperance organisation.<sup>46</sup> The League also had a number of Catholic employees working at the Lombard Café in the early twentieth century. In addition the League commended the Gaelic League in 1906 for their view that drunkenness was a disgrace.<sup>47</sup> Andrea Ebel Brozyna notes similar findings in her work and argues that *The Journal* praised Catholic temperance efforts and rarely made sectarian comments.

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<sup>42</sup> *ITLJ*, March 1866, p.151.

<sup>43</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1863, p.79.

<sup>44</sup> Malcolm, p.151; *ITLJ*, April 1887, p.27.

<sup>45</sup> Brozyna, p.170.

<sup>46</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1870, p.65.

<sup>47</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.6.

Yet the League's strong Protestant identity meant it was likely to be stronger within the Protestant community and among those who held the same theological beliefs. The religious ethos was naturally incorporated into organisational practices and traditions, therefore the language and prayers used during meetings and events would have made it difficult for members of the Catholic faith to participate.<sup>48</sup> This religious division became increasingly distinct following the devotional revolution within the Catholic Church, which brought about a stricter Catholicism among the population. This limited the desire for cross-community co-operation and made it increasingly unlikely for an individual of one religion to join an organisation on the 'other' side.

Following Father Mathew's Crusade in the 1840s, there was no organized Catholic temperance movement in Ireland until 1898 when Father James Cullen formed The Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of the Sacred Heart. Diarmaid Ferriter states that Cullen was disgusted by contemporary drinking customs which he blamed for the 'material and moral shortcomings' of society.<sup>49</sup> Consequently he 'sought to harness an elite group of Catholic activists' to set an example to society, persuading followers to take a life-long total abstinence pledge and 'declare their devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.'<sup>50</sup> Many of the Pioneers' attitudes toward alcohol and its subsequent effects, and their emphasis upon a professional and efficient temperance movement mirrored the ideologies found within the ITL. While theoretically these organisations could have worked well with each other, the reality of religious and political struggles in Ireland brought a tension into the Irish temperance movement that was not found in other areas. In addition unlike the League, the Pioneers were 'calculated to be strict and selective rather than a desire for an all-embracing crusade'.<sup>51</sup> Subsequently it 'tended to operate...as a self-contained unit' thus

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<sup>48</sup> David George Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland, the Search of Stability* (Dublin; Gill and Macmillan, 2005), pp.226-227.

<sup>49</sup> Ferriter, *A Nation of Extremes*, p.2.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p.2.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid, p.5.

the Pioneer's individualistic ethos arguably obstructed the possibility of connecting with a similar organisation.

In addition religious ethos in Ireland was automatically linked to a certain political and cultural identity. As a Protestant organisation the ITL was closely linked to the Unionist community. This would have indirectly prohibited Catholics/nationalists from joining the organisation due to the perception of sectarian connotations, which intensified following the outbreak of the Home Rule movement. A report in the *Freeman's Journal*, which was a nationalist newspaper, reported on a sectarian outbursts among ITL members and gives an indication of how the League was viewed by the Catholic/nationalist community. The report on 18 January 1889 noted its disgust at the sectarian comments made by ITL member, Dr Kane following the electoral endorsement of Nationalist MP Mr. Bigger. The report stated that

Dr Kane, the Orange champion, gave in the Ulster Hall on Wednesday evening an exhibition of fanatical bigotry and intolerance greater than we were disposed to credit even him with possessing.<sup>52</sup>

According to the report Kane, along with a number of supporters, began a chant of 'No Pope' in the hall and accused the remaining members of the ITL of treason for working with a Nationalist. Mr. William Johnston, who was President of the ITL at this time, 'dissociated himself from the antics of Dr Kane, and set that worthy a needed example of common sense and good manners.'<sup>53</sup> Johnston was also a renowned Orangeman and was known for fuelling sectarian tensions in late nineteenth century Ulster. That he formally disagreed with a fellow member of the Orange Order in his role as President of the ITL demonstrates the League's belief that there was no place for such opinions within the temperance movement. However even with Johnston's diplomatic manner in his role as ITL president, the comments from Kane demonstrates that the ITL struggled to distance itself from sectarian elements within the wider Unionist/Protestant community.

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<sup>52</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 18 January 1889.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

The lack of Catholic involvement in the League, especially in its leadership, and the lack of connections between the League and the Pioneers was simply a reflection of the extent to which Irish society was fundamentally divided. Despite its rhetoric, in reality there were strong limitations to the League's ability to be an all-embracing organisation. While the League claimed that it was an organisation for all creeds and denominations, there was limited opportunity for, and minimal interaction between Catholic and Protestant temperance communities post 1858.

### Business

Belfast in the nineteenth century had a number of successful temperance hotels, which catered for teetotal travellers and tourists. In addition to the ITL's Commercial Temperance Hotel, located at 82 Donegall Street, there was in 1840 a Temperance Hotel and Coffee House on Barrack Street and the Royal Temperance Hotel on Waring Street. The Belfast Arms Temperance Hotel opened at 19 High Street in 1840, Mrs. Spottens's Temperance Hotel on Bridge Street and the Yorkshire Temperance Hotel, Arthur Street.<sup>54</sup> By the 1870s only two of these hotels survived. These were private enterprises and not directly connected to the ITL, however the presence of this service demonstrated to the League that there was a temperance market in Belfast which it could tap into when developing its coffee business.

In Belfast there was also an attempt to replicate the dry pubs, which first began in England, and provided wholesome refreshments for the working class.<sup>55</sup> In 1874 two establishments, part of the British Workman's Public House movement, opened in Belfast. The Stepping Stone located at 44 York Street and The Rock located at 63 Mill Street.<sup>56</sup> Following this The Cliff, located at Great Victoria Street, opened in 1878. Yet in 1875 the executive of the ITL made it clear that their preference was for coffee-stands. The executive committee believed these 'worked as well as the British Workman's Public

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<sup>54</sup> "Belfast Street Directory 1840".

<sup>55</sup> McIntosh, 'Providing an Alternative to the Public House', p.11.

<sup>56</sup> "Belfast Street Directory 1874"; *BNL*, 8 January 1876.



House' but, unlike dry pubs, which were designed to look like and replicate the atmosphere of the public house, they provided a distinct alternative.<sup>57</sup> Underlining the ITL's preference was no doubt the desire to avoid promoting connotations of the trade and profession, which it was attempting to destroy. Gillian McIntosh argues that other influential individuals in Belfast also became uncomfortable with such associations and so dry pubs failed to proliferate.<sup>58</sup> In addition to the undesirable social connotations evoked by a dry 'pub', it was simply not an efficient business model. Dry pubs had to compete with the well-established traditional public house, and simply could not attract sufficient customers in order to make money. They relied primarily on funds by private subscriptions in order to survive.<sup>59</sup> The League was not financially stable in the 1860s, only breaking even in 1863. Even in 1869 the organisation only cleared a total of £51 after its expenses were paid. The core leadership of the ITL had a significant number of members who were sharp businessmen who stressed the importance of organisation, structure and stability in any commercial enterprise. Coffee houses developed a business model based on providing society with desirable commodities thus gave the League a better chance of becoming self-sustaining. It is clear to see why the ITL avoided the dry pubs, which would have affected its small profit and put more pressure on the organisation for more donations.

Scottish temperance reformers were the pioneers of the coffee-stand and the cafe movement.<sup>60</sup> From the 1830s coffeehouses were opened throughout Scotland. However it was not until 1859 that the Glasgow Abstiners Union (GAU) opened the first coffee stand in the city.<sup>61</sup> The League first expressed a desire to introduce coffee houses to Belfast in 1862, however in 1864 an opportunity became available in Dublin to open 'a cheap dining depot, like those of Glasgow'.<sup>62</sup> The committee stated

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<sup>57</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1875, p.26.

<sup>58</sup> McIntosh, pp.12-13.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid*, p.13; Logan, p.93.

<sup>60</sup> Logan, p 91.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>62</sup> *ITLJ*, January 1864, p.15.

we are turning the coffee-room at the Temperance Hall, Dublin, into a good dining depot on this plan. A number of us have taken shares of £1 each, and sufficient capital will thus be raised to fit up the place thoroughly, and make it most commodious and comfortable. Mr. B. Benson, a man of colour, who is well known as a Temperance lecturer, will be manager of it, and Mr. and Mrs. Benson are well qualified to conduct it with ability, and so as to give satisfaction. This will be a superior plan I believe, to any system of collecting funds.<sup>63</sup>

Following this the Cork committee opened the Cork Refreshment Rooms in 1866.<sup>64</sup> In 1872 David Fortune, who was originally from Glasgow, was appointed secretary of the League in Belfast.<sup>65</sup> Fortune's skill and experience of the coffee-business in Scotland undoubtedly gave the League the boost needed to begin their coffee business in Belfast.<sup>66</sup> While the League began with developing coffee rooms in the south of Ireland, these became convenient coffee kiosks for the busy industrial society in Belfast. In 1874 the League opened its first coffee stand in Donegall Quay in Belfast.<sup>67</sup> Unlike the dry pubs, temperance hotels, and coffee houses, which were avenues for leisure and socialising, the coffee kiosks were functional, providing a quick source of convenient sustenance for the working class. The limited seating highlights the fact that these kiosks were not for relaxation. The convenient location of the kiosks was highlighted in the 1890 Belfast Street Directory which described them as 'supplying the working classes with coffee and other light refreshments at cheap rates in 15 commodious stands in the most public thoroughfares in Belfast.'<sup>68</sup> McIntosh argues that the numbers using the kiosks demonstrated the need for such provisions in a 'hectic commercial town' such as Belfast.<sup>69</sup> Demand for these establishments led the ITL to extend its business and open establishments outside of Belfast including Derry, Ballymoney, Lisburn and Coleraine.<sup>70</sup> In 1878 the League expanded its Belfast business model and opened the Lombard Café.

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<sup>63</sup> *ITLJ*, January 1864, p.15.

<sup>64</sup> McIntosh, p.23.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, p.11.

<sup>66</sup> Fredrick Sherlock, 'The Irish Temperance League', in *Fifty Years Ago*, ed. by Fredrick Sherlock (Belfast: n.p. 1879), p.98.

<sup>67</sup> Minute Book, 15 April 1874.

<sup>68</sup> "Belfast Street Directory 1890".

<sup>69</sup> McIntosh, p.8.

<sup>70</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906-1912.

This was a first class establishment aimed at the League's more affluent followers.

According to Sherlock

the success, which attended the establishment of the Coffee Stands encouraged the Executive to process with a scheme for the erection in Belfast of a first class Temperance Café.<sup>71</sup>

The café was located on the bottom floor of the League's building.<sup>72</sup> An official opening ceremony was held on 30 January 1878. This was presided over by Sir John Preston, the Mayor of Belfast, which illustrates the prestigious position held by the ITL and the support for temperance activity by Belfast's political elite.<sup>73</sup>

The financial aid that the coffee business provided for the philanthropic operations of the League demonstrates the shrewdness with which the League functioned. In 1889 the League stated that

The aid to which the trustees are enabled to obtain from the profits derived from the café and coffee stand has been a most welcome relief to your executive. Last year £413 17s 5d was received from this source.<sup>74</sup>

In effect the League formed a for-profit company that would fund its non-profit organisation. This is commonly known as the 'hybrid ideal', which is defined as a business model that uses 'product sales to fund its social mission, reducing dependence on donations, grants and subsidies, as well as to scale up the organisation.'<sup>75</sup> This approach to charitable work is still regarded as pioneering today, thus illustrating the innovative and progressive nature of the tactics used by the ITL in the nineteenth century. The League became incorporated in 1900 and established the Irish Temperance (Trading) League Ltd (ITTL).<sup>76</sup> From this point on the ITL was the philanthropic section of the movement, while the ITTL represented the business section. The ITL owned shares in the ITTL, meaning

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<sup>71</sup> Sherlock, p.100.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid, p.101.

<sup>74</sup> *BNL*, 17 January 1889.

<sup>75</sup> "In Search of the Hybrid Ideal", Julie Battilana, Mathew Lee, John Walker and Cheryl Dorsey, in *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, accessed 12 March 2016, [www.ssir.org](http://www.ssir.org).

<sup>76</sup> *Minute Book*, 14 January 1900.

that it received a percentage of income. This effectively formalised the ITL's profit-for-non-profit structure, under the business model they had been using since the 1870s. The ITTL's business thrived in Belfast until the 1970s when political and civil disruptions engulfed the city. Following bomb damage on two of the ITL's cafés the board decided to sell.<sup>77</sup>

	<b>Subscriptions to the League</b>	<b>Dividend on Shares in ITL Trading Ltd</b>	<b>Receipts towards expenses of conferences</b>	<b>Sale of Literature</b>
<b>1906</b>	641	900	75	35
<b>1907</b>	642	900	184	11
<b>1908</b>	831	600	135	13
<b>1909</b>	650	950	53	11
<b>1910</b>	615	950	78	3
<b>1911</b>	601	1,500	62	1
<b>1912</b>	543	1,050	49	3

**Table 3.1: Sources of income, in pounds, for the ITL between 1906 and 1912 (Source: *ITLRB*, 1906-1912).**

The League received a significant dividend on shares each year from their business branch (See Table 3.1). Another aspect of the ITL's 'hybrid ideal' was the inclusion of 'a non-profit and a for-profit, each of which was uniquely dependent on the other for its sustained existence'.<sup>78</sup> In order for the kiosks and cafes to survive the ITL had to increase public support for total abstinence. At the same time, in order for total abstinence to gain support, the ITL had to provide alternatives and support systems for its followers. Both sections of the League's operations were inextricably linked. The League believed that by educating society in the principles of total abstinence, there would be an increased demand for its coffee kiosks and cafes. This would result in an increase in profits, which would result in an increased amount of finance available for the League's outreach programmes.

<sup>77</sup> McIntosh, p.15.

<sup>78</sup> 'In Search of the Hybrid Ideal'.

The ITL stated that their café and coffee house movement had ‘done much to foster and promote temperance principles.’<sup>79</sup> Within the ITL’s business section everything had to produce both ‘social value and commercial revenue’ and uphold the core values held by the League.<sup>80</sup> As all refreshments were non-alcoholic this promoted total abstinence rendering the ‘growth of sales and fulfilment of a mission’ inseparable.<sup>81</sup>

The League also used customers and the profits from the business as an indicator of support for total abstinence. It held that the success of the coffee kiosks and cafes ‘marks the change that is passing over the habits of the people’.<sup>82</sup> In reality there was a range of variable factors which affected one’s decision to purchase provisions from a coffee shop. In some occasions the ITL’s kiosk was simply perceived as the local corner shop.<sup>83</sup> However ITL rhetoric failed to acknowledge these and from its perspective a consumer equalled a total abstainer.

The League’s staff also had to embody the organisation’s values. At the most basic level all staff had to be teetotal in order to demonstrate the advantages of sobriety to the rest of society. From the 1870s those hired under the ITL’s philanthropic branch were continually monitored to ensure they upheld the League’s values. For instance two of three agents in 1872 were removed from their position after a committee report found them to be unsatisfactory characters, with a poor work ethic and who failed to prioritise either total abstinence or the ITL.<sup>84</sup> One agent in particular, Mr. Woods, stated that he would have no misgivings about leaving the League’s work in the middle of the day if other matters required his assistance.<sup>85</sup> Clearly the committee of the League was prepared to remove anyone who did not continue to put its needs and objectives first.

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<sup>79</sup> *BNL*, 18 April 1884.

<sup>80</sup> ‘In Search of the Hybrid Ideal’.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>82</sup> *BNL*, 18 April 1884.

<sup>83</sup> PRONI, Belfast, Printed memoir of Mr. Fredrick McGinley, T3580/1.

<sup>84</sup> Minute Book, 13 September 1872.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

In terms of the coffee kiosks the ITL prioritised individuals who symbolised its philanthropic and total abstinence principles. Personnel at this level of the organisation were typical working-class men and women. Hiring members of the working class was also used to symbolise ITL's values through a visual example of sobriety, social respectability and social advancement. When advertising these positions the League often called for a husband and wife to apply together.<sup>86</sup> A position advertised in the *Belfast News-Letter* in 1890, was given to Mr. Samuel McIlwaine and his wife Jane. Mr. and Mrs. McIlwaine, who resided at 15 Agincourt Street in Belfast, managed the coffee rooms at Castle Market in Belfast for over ten years.<sup>87</sup> The request for a husband and wife no doubt reflected a desire to embody the benefits which could be derived from sobriety and hard work, namely respectability and financial security.

In addition the staff employed to run the Lombard Café demonstrated the opportunities the ITL provided for personal and professional development. In the early twentieth century, Miss Jemima Robertson was the manager of the League's first class coffee house.<sup>88</sup> Miss Robertson was responsible for fourteen female employees who worked in the café and lived in the staff accommodation next door.<sup>89</sup> In 1906 Miss Robertson moved to Bournemouth in order to 'start a boarding establishment'.<sup>90</sup> The skills and experience gained during her time working for the ITL no doubt allowed for her advancement. The management position was passed to Miss Elizabeth Barbour who had been Robertson's assistant for a number of years.<sup>91</sup> Again this shows that while women's positions were typically confined to the domestic sphere, the League was willing to offer its staff opportunities for progress. Additionally, Miss Robertson and Miss Barbour were both Presbyterians. Their employees included Presbyterians, an Anglican and a Methodist.

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<sup>86</sup> *BNL*, 15 February 1890.

<sup>87</sup> "Belfast Street Directory 1890"; 'The National Census 1911', accessed 14 February 2016, [www.census.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie).

<sup>88</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.18.

<sup>89</sup> 'The National Census 1901', accessed 14 February 2016, [www.census.nationalarchives.ie](http://www.census.nationalarchives.ie).

<sup>90</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.18.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

Notably a third of the girls were Catholic, demonstrating that, in terms of employment at the Lombard Café, the ITL was open to all religious denominations in Belfast.

This section has shown the League's professional strategy over the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, which it used in order to develop a vast network of total abstainers throughout Ireland and Britain. This ultimately placed the ITL in a position of social prestige which helped the League to develop a strong business portfolio. This then provided the organisation with financial security and the ability to conduct its philanthropic work effectively. This chapter will now move on to consider the outreach work of the League.

### ***Outreach Strategy***

There were four features of the League's outreach strategy; these were education, lifestyle support, prevention and recovery. It primarily dealt with educating the public on the dangers of intemperance and the benefits of a teetotal lifestyle. A range of alternatives was then provided in order to support and encourage participation within a total abstinence culture. The ITL also worked in establishing preventative measures in an attempt to protect future generations from the dangers of alcohol. In addition the League had programmes, that focused on recovery of those who had already succumbed to intemperance.

#### **Education**

League arguments stipulated that 'there is no habit more useful than that of total abstinence from alcoholic drinks.'<sup>92</sup> It wanted society to conform to its perception of acceptable standards of conduct and like most temperance organisations with a moral suasion agenda the ITL believed that this could largely be achieved through education. The League believed that the best way to spread its educational message was through the press, pulpit and the legislator.<sup>93</sup> In terms of the press, the ITL regularly published advertisements and details of its work local newspaper including the *Belfast News-Letter* and the

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<sup>92</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1886, p.62.

<sup>93</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1870, p.34.

*Freemans Journal*. Throughout the nineteenth century it also developed relationships with supportive clergy. This is represented by the number of clergymen within its ranks who gave sermons on the issues of total abstinence. In addition the League not only campaigned for temperance legislation but members of the executive committee were also instrumental in developing a number of Bills, such as the Liquor Traffic (Local Veto) Ulster Bill 1886. However these elements were the external channels, which the ITL employed in order to spread their message. The League also extended its educational material to the public through the use of its agents and publications.

### Agents

Agents were full-time paid employees of the League who spread its brand of temperance throughout Ireland. They had a dual purpose of lecturing to and holding public meetings with existing temperance societies and forming new ones in affiliation with the ITL, and were thus required to travel extensively in order to advance the total abstinence and prohibition movement.<sup>94</sup> During events agents issued the League's version of the total abstinence pledge which participants signed as a symbol of commitment to a life of sobriety. Societies that were already in connection with the ITL, and which paid the required subscription fee, could request the use of an agent to hold lectures or a public meeting in their local area. Therefore many of the ITL events throughout Ireland were at the request of local temperance individuals. However the League also aimed to form new societies in areas where the temperance movement was weak. In 1865 Mr. Russell reported to the committee on the difficulties in advancing the ITL in areas where it was unknown.<sup>95</sup> However he persevered and much of the expansion into rural areas in southern Ireland was due to Russell.

The ITL used 'agents' from its earliest days. In 1856, it would seem that a Mr. Revel carried out some work in association with Alexander Mayne, but the first official agent of

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<sup>94</sup> *BNL*, 19 January 1860.

<sup>95</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1864, p45.



the ITL, Mr. Benjamin Benson, was not employed until August 1859.<sup>96</sup> When compared to the Scottish temperance movement, the inclusion of an employed agent in the 1850s once again highlights the progressive nature of the League. While the STL had agents they were typically amateur and voluntary, it was not until the 1870s that the organisation began to employ salaried agents.<sup>97</sup> Conversely in Belfast both the UTS and the BTAA had employed an agent in the 1840s and 50s. Therefore the League undoubtedly drew inspiration from its predecessors. Unlike the BTAA, the League endeavoured to have two agents constantly at work.<sup>98</sup> In the late nineteenth century the League continued to expand their agency department and had no less than three agents at work at any one time. New positions included a police, court and city missionary, an official organiser of juvenile work, a school lecturer and a financial agent responsible for the collection of funds and donations.<sup>99</sup> The vast majority of the League's agents were men. Between 1858 and 1914 only one female was employed as an agent. In 1906 a Miss Donaghy was the agent in charge of juvenile work within the ITL.<sup>100</sup>

Within his first year it is reported that Benson 'formed 18 auxiliaries, lectured in 40 towns and villages and held 224 public meetings'.<sup>101</sup> Mr. Benson was an, 'evangelist, preacher and temperance agent' who came to Belfast with Revel in 1859 following a trip to England.<sup>102</sup> An advertisement in the *Belfast News-Letter* in 1860 defined Benson as 'a gentleman of colour, now in a position to supply societies with lectures.'<sup>103</sup> Benson was an exotic figure in nineteenth-century Ireland but not unprecedented. There was an active abolitionist movement in Belfast within which it was common to employ black men to give lectures. Travelling temperance and abolitionist reformers in Ireland were often black.

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<sup>96</sup> Mayne, p.25.

<sup>97</sup> Logan, p.16.

<sup>98</sup> Mayne, p.27.

<sup>99</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906-1912.

<sup>100</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.4.

<sup>101</sup> Mayne, p.27.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, p.25.

<sup>103</sup> *BNL*, 11 May 1860.

In 1841 ‘Mr. Charles Lennox Redmond, the most influential black American abolitionist, held a series of successful antislavery meetings in Ireland, assisted by Irish abolitionists like Richard Allen, and James Haughton.’<sup>104</sup> The BTAA sponsored Mr. Joseph Woodhouse, a former slave, to give lectures on slavery at St Mathew’s School on the Shankill Road in 1856.<sup>105</sup> There can be no doubt that Benson’s employment was a clear indication of the League’s anti-slavery principles. These were inextricably linked to their total abstinence ideologies. Such ideas were articulated in *The Journal* in 1865, which stated about slavery that

Belfast was saved from that great damnation: Ireland was saved from the stigma of that accursed traffic. No ship ever left an Irish port to bear away our fellow-men into slavery...But slavery of another kind – and slavery ever more galling enchains you and your country in our own day. Let us rise up in manly dignity and power and set our selves free. Ours is the slavery of mind and body: a slavery to sensualism, which drags down to the gutter and before our eyes multitudes of our fellow-men—"bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh"—who are degraded below the power of words to express, and who might be, but for this one vice, useful and honored citizens.<sup>106</sup>

In the formative years of the League Benson and the other agents concentrated their efforts on Ulster. Despite a few occasions when Benson spent some time in Cork in 1862, he was primarily a northern agent. This was a trend that continued when Mr. John Pyper was employed as an agent from November 1862.<sup>107</sup> The concentration of the League’s work in the northern province was a cause of concern for the core leadership and attempts were made to expand its reach. Therefore, as discussed in Chapter Two, in October 1864 Mr. T.W. Russell was appointed southern agent of the League.<sup>108</sup> Russell’s appointment highlights the ITL’s strategy of splitting Ireland in to more manageable sections. This provided each agent with a distinct work area. While this was not definitive it undoubtedly set realistic goals for the agents. Organisations in the Scottish temperance movement also

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<sup>104</sup> Colm Kerrigan, ‘Irish Temperance and US Anti-Slavery: Father Mathew and Abolitionists’, *History Workshop*, 31 (1991), pp.105-119.

<sup>105</sup> Malcolm, p.163.

<sup>106</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1865, p.82.

<sup>107</sup> *BNL*, 22 April 1862.

<sup>108</sup> Mayne, p.27; By 1865 By 1867 Benson was proprietor of the Prince Leopold Temperance Hotel in Dublin.

experimented with dividing large areas between geographic units in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>109</sup> In 1868 the League reported at its annual meeting that ‘agents Pyper and Russell are working tirelessly in the north and the south and the number of affiliated societies are on the increase.’<sup>110</sup> In 1869 Pyper held 180 meetings, while Russell held 150.<sup>111</sup> Clearly the employment of two agents, working in specific areas, allowed the League to increase its profile. The League’s expansion into the south from 1865 was a direct result of Russell’s work. By 1866 the ITL had at least one affiliated society in twenty-seven out of the thirty-two counties in Ireland.<sup>112</sup>

The location of the societies, in addition to the location of the lectures conducted by the League’s agents allows for an analysis of the geographical spread of the ITL in the early twentieth century. Between 1906 and 1912 agents brought an extra 58 societies throughout Ireland into affiliation with the ITL. This indicates the continued growth of the temperance movement in the early twentieth century. The map shown in Chapter Two demonstrates that in terms of affiliated societies, the ITL had largely been successful in its national aspirations. However the majority of societies were located in traditionally Protestant areas, reflecting the Protestant ethos of the ITL. Sources also indicate that the number of temperance lectures increased in the twentieth century. In 1906 the League conducted 130 meetings outside Belfast. By 1912 this had increased to 190. The percentage of the agents’ lectures when divided between the four provinces is shown in the table below. While the predominance of Ulster remains visible, it can be seen that the League conducted work all over Ireland (See Table 3.2).

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<sup>109</sup> Logan, p.29.

<sup>110</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1866, p.62.

<sup>111</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1869, p.47.

<sup>112</sup> Malcolm, p.177.

	1906	1912
<b>Ulster</b>	72.31	73.16
<b>Munster</b>	14.62	14.74
<b>Leinster</b>	12.31	8.42
<b>Connaught</b>	0	3.16

**Table 3.2: Distribution of ITL meetings, in percentages, between the four provinces in Ireland in 1906 and 1912 (*Source: ITL Report Book 1906 – 1912*).**

Between 1906 and 1912 the League transferred some of its activity in Leinster to Connaught. This may reflect the fact that there was already a strong temperance movement in Leinster and the ITL felt it did not need to replicate this work and wanted to concentrate on developing its work into areas where it was not present. Connaught was lacking in a strong temperance ethos therefore the increase in the League's work in that area could reflect a proactive approach in order to spread the total abstinence movement into the west of Ireland.

The content of the ITL's temperance meetings shows that agents were encouraged to add their own personal touches to the job. In the early days of the League Mr. Revel reportedly had a passion for music. He typically used his concertina and range of temperance melodies to draw in and entertain large crowds.<sup>113</sup> In 1856 the *Belfast News-Letter* when reporting on one of Mr. Revels temperance meetings stated:

Mr Revel sustained the attention of his audience for a long time with admirably told anecdotes, illustrating the dreadful evils of intemperance and the manifold advantages of totally abstaining from intoxicating drinks. Suitable hymns were heartily joined in, produced a most enlivening and agreeable effect.<sup>114</sup>

Benson on the other hand was an evangelical preacher and was not interested in music as Revel had been. Throughout Benson's time as agent, temperance lectures were more pious. Follow-on prayer meetings and efforts to gain religious conversions were more common

<sup>113</sup> *BNL*, 15 November 1856; *BNL*, 22 April 1857.

<sup>114</sup> *BNL*, 22 April 1857.

than the upbeat musical lectures seen in Revel's time.<sup>115</sup> In addition to total abstinence material, Benson also lectured on slavery.<sup>116</sup> However the pious tone of Benson's meetings was also a reflection of the religious context of the Ulster Revival at the time. This is discussed in detail in Chapter Five. Other agents such as Pyper enhanced the link between temperance and education, while Russell on the other hand, placed prominence upon legislation and temperance in his lectures.

In the League's formative years agents were part of the core leadership of the ITL. Pyper was simultaneously an agent and vice-president of the ITL and later went on to become a member of the executive committee. Agents such as Benson, Pyper and Russell were staunch total abstinence reformers. In 1863 Rev John Mecredy of Clifton Street Presbyterian Church, stated that

they had never been so fortunate in their selection of an agent. He was happy to be able to testify to the efficiency, integrity, Christian character and enthusiasm in their temperance movement, which characterised Mr. Pyper.<sup>117</sup>

Yet the difference between early agents such those mentioned above, and those who followed reflected the transition from initial activists, motivated by the advancement of the temperance movement, to those employed to perform a job. By 1872 the executive found it necessary to form an interim committee in order to consider the agency department.<sup>118</sup> The committee found that the current arrangement allowed too much flexibility within the role. Even Mr. Hussey, the only agent that the committee deemed satisfactory in 1872, stated that he would

feel uncomfortable if a hard and fast line were drawn as to the exact number of hours he had to devote to the League. He could not work under such limits, as that would reduce his labour to a mere mechanical service.<sup>119</sup>

Clearly there was a breakdown in communication. This was reflected in the disconnection between the League's rhetoric of how an agent should manage the job and the reality of

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<sup>115</sup> *BNL*, 22 April 1857.

<sup>116</sup> *BNL*, 6 September 1859.

<sup>117</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1863, p.17.

<sup>118</sup> Minute Book, 13 September 1872.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid*.

how it was conducted by employees. Following the report the executive committee found it necessary to put measures in place to exert a greater level of control over the agency department. A job description was produced which was essentially a set of rules the agents were required to adopt.<sup>120</sup> Agents were required to submit weekly reports, they were no longer allowed to attend committee meetings (unless invited), and addresses and lectures had to be monitored and approved by the executive. In addition agents had to report to the League office before ten o'clock in the morning on days when they were in Belfast.<sup>121</sup>

Conversely, not all agents were as 'unsatisfactory' as those found in 1872. In fact the majority of agents in the years after 1872 were passionate and dedicated to the ideologies of the ITL and total abstinence. For instance in the 1870s the League employed Mr. B.T. Herring, who was an agent for over thirty years.<sup>122</sup> Nonetheless events in 1872 formalised the hierarchical structures within the ITL and placed distance between the leadership and agents. The change is also reflected in the social status of the individuals that the League employed as agents after 1872. An advertisement for an agent position published in the *Belfast News-Letter* in 1882 stated that

the Irish Temperance League require a gentleman of ability and exceptional character as agent, who will be expected to give his entire time to the duties of the appointment. Apply with full particulars as to past experience, salary expected and enclose copies of testimonials.<sup>123</sup>

Agents were only required to be men of good social standing and there is no evidence to suggest that any were reformed drunkards, or had ever struggled with alcohol. The religious affiliation of the agents, however, stayed similar to the religious composition of the core leadership of the ITL.<sup>124</sup> Agents were comprised individuals from a range of Protestant denominations including Presbyterian, Methodist, and Congregationalist.

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<sup>120</sup> Minute Book, 11 July 1873.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 13 September 1872.

<sup>122</sup> *BNL*, 7 May 1879; *ITLJ*, February 1906, p.4.

<sup>123</sup> *BNL*, 14th December 1882.

<sup>124</sup> Logan, p.17.

Temperance lectures started out with an agent discussing temperance ideologies however over time these were supplemented with magic lanterns slides. The most popular magic lantern show used by the League in the nineteenth century was Cruikshank's "Bottle Plates".<sup>125</sup> 'The Bottle', as it was commonly known, was a series of 8 illustrations, which portrayed one family's descent into poverty due to the influence of alcohol.<sup>126</sup> Interestingly the family used in these illustrations was a middle class family who begin life in domestic bliss but through the consumption of alcohol became victims of crime, poverty and disease. With the dissemination of the illustration, the ITL were blatantly suggesting to its audience that whilst sobriety was a ladder to affluence, alcohol meant a slide into poverty. Additionally the content within the magic lantern shows frequently gave lessons on general knowledge. For instance a lantern show often given by Herring in 1881 was titled, 'A Pictorial Tour through Ireland'. By the 1890s the League had access to slides depicting an 'illustrative tour around the world.'<sup>127</sup> These general knowledge lectures were an attempt to attract a wider audience who might not come to an obviously titled temperance talk.

Yet they also demonstrated that lectures were for the advancement of public knowledge in a range of matters and not simply lessons on total abstinence. Education was perceived to be linked to an individual's respectability and social standing. For instance McIntosh states that in the nineteenth century 'there was much talk of the betterment of the working classes by means of education.'<sup>128</sup> A large percentage of the agent lectures were free, and where they were not there was a concessionary rate for the poor.<sup>129</sup> This suggests that the ITL actively encouraged the working class to attend these events. To this end the ITL was in keeping with contemporary perceptions. However lectures and topics reflected the agent's opinion on what constituted beneficial material. In 1872 the executive committee suggested to agents that they should hold conference with influential residents,

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<sup>125</sup> *BNL*, 30 July 1862.

<sup>126</sup> "Cruikshank's 'The Bottle', accessed 16 January 2016, [www.britishmuseum.org](http://www.britishmuseum.org).

<sup>127</sup> *BNL*, 24 March 1894.

<sup>128</sup> McIntosh, p.6.

<sup>129</sup> *BNL*, 28 May 1868, *BNL*, 3 April 1875.

after temperance lectures.<sup>130</sup> This could have been an attempt to localise temperance meetings, in an attempt better to meet the needs of local residents. Yet the influential and middle-class character of those who were invited to such meetings demonstrated a top down approach to temperance.

Agents embodied the link between the hierarchy of the League and the society within which they were trying to promote change.<sup>131</sup> As the face of the League, they undoubtedly humanised the large Belfast organisation, especially for societies in rural areas. In 1868 Mr. Samuel Brown who lived Killaney, Co. Down, wrote a letter to his cousin Jeannie in Philadelphia. Seemingly the teetotal population of his town needed to be ‘defended’ against the local Anglican clergyman, who was opposed to total abstinence.<sup>132</sup> Mr. Brown suggests that local people deliberately invited Mr. Pyper, the ITLs then agent, to come to their village and give temperance lectures. As he wrote, Pyper was ‘a very talented man’ and lectured to the local people on five separate occasions.<sup>133</sup> The section on the ITL’s business work, demonstrated how the League was a visible presence in Belfast. The kiosks and café was a constant reminder of the League and its principles. It was this that the travelling agent attempted to replicate throughout the rest of Ireland. Lectures and meetings duplicated the entertainment evenings that were common in Belfast. The social atmosphere provided by the presence of a travelling agent is highlighted in the following description of Pyper’s visit to the small town of Ballycastle, Co Antrim in 1863. It was reported that

A very large meeting was held at Ballycastle in the spacious building known as the "Glass House," under the auspices of Mrs. Boyd, of the Mansion, who is a strict teetotaler and a warm advocate of the cause. Mr. Henry Tyler, J.P., occupied the chair and Mr. Pyper lectured on the occasion. On the motion of the chairman, seconded by Mr. J.B. Doyle, a vote of thanks to the lecturer was carried by acclamation. On the next evening, 25th May, Mrs. Boyd entertained a numerous assemblage on the Boyd estate at a soiree in the same place. On the platform were Mr. and Mrs. Boyd of the Mansion, Mr. H. Tyler, J.P., and the Misses Tyler, Mr. and

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<sup>130</sup> Minute Book, 13th September 1872.

<sup>131</sup> Logan, notes the same argument with in the STL.

<sup>132</sup> PRONI, Belfast, Samuel Brown Killaney Co. Down to Jeannie, T2675/4.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid.



Mrs. J. B. Doyle. After tea Mr. Pyper addressed the meeting, and a considerable number of names were enrolled in the total abstinence list.<sup>134</sup>

Agents were also the vessel through which information was passed to and from the League. Therefore they provided the League with a channel through which it could spread its principles. Underpinning this was undoubtedly an effort to enhance proselytism and recruitment within the total abstinence movement. Clearly for the ITL personalisation of its message, through the use of travelling agents, allowed for a stronger relationship than would have been possible had the ITL maintained contact via written communication. This was of vital importance as the main purpose of temperance societies was to support current members and to gain new ones.

Travelling agents also enabled the League to evaluate the strength of the temperance movement throughout the country. In 1873 the agent, Mr. Hussey, reported to the executive the difficulty he had in entering new districts where the League was unknown. In this Hussey was raising similar concerns that Russell had faced in the 1860s which indicated that a change of procedure was necessary. A circular was then produced and sent to the most influential men in each locality.<sup>135</sup> This demonstrated how the ITL listened to the experience of its agents and used this to adapt its approach as and when necessary. In addition it demonstrates how the agent's knowledge directed the executive to use their connections in order to advance the movement.

### Written Material

Like its British counterparts, the ITL put faith in the 'written appeal for sobriety.'<sup>136</sup> Between 1863 and 1906 the League published the *Irish Temperance League Journal*. Members of the League believed that *The Journal* was the life organ of the temperance movement and 'the only monthly devoted to social reform in Ireland.'<sup>137</sup> In 1866 T.W.

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<sup>134</sup> *ITLJ*, July 1865, p.112.

<sup>135</sup> Minute Book, 13th September 1872.

<sup>136</sup> Harrison, p.106.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*.

Russell and the committee of the Dublin Tract published the *Irish Temperance Star*.<sup>138</sup> As Russell, was the southern agent for the League he enhanced the ITL's connections to the temperance movement in Dublin and for a short time in the 1860 the ITL was linked to two periodicals. Malcolm argues that from 1867, *The Star* became the official organ of the southern branch of the League. However other than announcing the first issue of *The Star*, the League makes no other reference to it. This highlights the disconnection between the temperance movements in Belfast and Dublin. When Russell left the ITL, its work in Dublin could not be sustained and the connection to the periodical in that area was broken.

The first advertisement for *The Journal* appeared in the *Belfast News-Letter* in January 1863 stating

the committee of the Irish Temperance League have arrived at the conclusion that the time has come when the increasing importance and extending operations of that body justify them in issuing '*The Journal*,' and is asking for it the support and commendation of all who are affiliated with the Institution, as well as of those who, though not in connection, wish the cause of Total Abstinence, "God Speed".<sup>139</sup>

*The Journal* included information on the temperance movement in Ireland, Britain and at times America. In addition it included literature which reflected the League's core values and lessons it wanted to extend throughout society. Extensive articles on the need for legislative prohibition and medical arguments against alcohol were also a regular feature. These were usually in response to an attack on the League's methods, in defence of its prohibitionist ideologies and its opinions of the medicinal properties of alcohol. Logan states that the STL conducted their monthly publication in a similar manner and many pages were used to 'counter hostile press reports'.<sup>140</sup>

There was also more general literature, information on science, natural history and other leading subjects of an educational nature.<sup>141</sup> The monthly periodical also included a column called 'Housewives Corner'. This comprised domestic hints and tips for female

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<sup>138</sup> *ITLJ*, March 1866, p.21.

<sup>139</sup> *BNL*, 16 January 1863.

<sup>140</sup> Logan, p.70.

<sup>141</sup> *BNL*, 9 January 1863.

readers, which reflected the ITL's belief in the moral obligation a wife had to her family.<sup>142</sup> Other sections included 'Family Pastimes' which detailed acceptable recreational activities. In addition the 'Selections for the Young' included appropriate reading material for younger followers.<sup>143</sup> Guest writers comprising medical, religious, political and temperance individuals from Ireland, Britain and America were also a common feature in the publication.

As stated previously, the League had a substantial individual membership. *The Journal* was one method through which the ITL could include and maintain their involvement in the temperance movement. In England Joseph Livsey used his periodicals in order to creating a sense of identity and support among abstainers.<sup>144</sup> In 1866 the League reduced the price of *The Journal* to 1d in order to 'keep in line with cheap literature.'<sup>145</sup> Such provisions may represent an attempt at remaining available to the less affluent members of society. On the other hand it could simply have been a change necessary in order to compete with other cheap literature in the Victorian period. The *Belfast News-Letter* reported that *The Journal* 'received a hearty welcome from all classes.'<sup>146</sup> Although not an academic journal, the articulate and educated manner in which the articles were written leaves no doubt that it was catering largely for a well-read audience. At the same time the desire to provide the working classes with the tools necessary for self-advancement is evident in the amount of self-help advertisements and incentives published in *The Journal*. By the early decades of the twentieth century it was common to find advertisements encouraging the working classes to buy their own homes.<sup>147</sup>

In 1906 *The Journal* was rebranded as *Everybody's Monthly*. The League stated that 'in the columns there should be space devoted to temperance work of every kind in all

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<sup>142</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1863, p.60.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid*, p.35.

<sup>144</sup> McAllister, p.309.

<sup>145</sup> *BNL*, 29 March 1866.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>147</sup> *Everybody's Monthly*, 1906.

parts of the country.’<sup>148</sup> The name change was an attempt to increase demand for the publication. There was also a shift in content away from focusing exclusively on the League’s work, to include more information about all total abstinence work in Ireland. The League made provisions so that Eason & Sons sold the periodical in order to make it more widely available throughout the country.<sup>149</sup> The executive committee reported in 1906 that circulation had been very considerably increased. However sales for the periodical fell dramatically between 1906 and 1912 (See Table 3.1). The reduction in sales for *The Journal* was a result of the extensive travelling library that the League had acquired by this period. Traveling libraries, which included an extensive collection of magic lantern slides, were available for speakers and conductors of temperance societies. These were ‘placed at the disposal of friends’ who could rent them on a daily or weekly rate.<sup>150</sup> The inspiration for this work came from the Mayne family who provided a similar service in regards to the provision of books and magic lantern slides at the Ulster Tract Depository in Belfast in the nineteenth century.<sup>151</sup> Evidently they used their years of professional experience to the ITL’s advantage. By 1912 the League had a total of ‘40 libraries, all of which included an assortment of charts, diagrams and up to 50 text books.’<sup>152</sup> The libraries were utilised by societies affiliated to the League including, the Boys and Girls Clubs, Bands of Hope, local temperance societies, village libraries, branches of the Protestant Total Abstinence Union, and mission halls.<sup>153</sup> Ladies were encouraged to become honorary librarians in order to make the libraries available in their local area.<sup>154</sup> The League argued that due to the educational material it made available, friends were ‘enabled to give variety to their

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<sup>148</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.16.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>150</sup> *ITLRB*, 1910, p.12.

<sup>151</sup> Unknown, *The Industries of Ireland, Belfast and Towns of the North, the Provinces of Ulster and Connaught, Businessmen and Mercantile Interests* (Belfast: Historical Publishing Company, 1891), p.64.

<sup>152</sup> *ITLRB*, 1910, p.12.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid*.

meetings and to teach temperance truths by the eyes as well as the ears.’<sup>155</sup> Underpinning this was a firm belief within the ITL that the temperance movement would only be successful through a visual example of its benefits. Through orchestrating work of this nature the ITL made sure it remained in control of the content and lessons taught.

As has been shown the ITL promoted its educational message through the use of travelling agents, the publication of its own periodical and through the provision of other printed literature in the early twentieth century. The lessons within the ITL’s educational material is divided into four main categories which have been classified as moral, health, wealth and nation.<sup>156</sup> While these elements are looked at individually in this research, they were not always disconnected. For example, Cruickshank’s Bottle Plates, incorporated moral, health and wealth lessons. This chapter will discuss the main lesson the ITL wanted to promote before going back to analyse the remaining three sections of its outreach strategy.

### *Moral*

The ITL believed that ‘temperance reform lies at the root of all social and moral progress.’<sup>157</sup> The League’s moral argument can be categorised into three core lessons: personal, social and political. Firstly, the League’s moral argument was concerned with personal abstinence. The League taught that the consumption of alcohol was a sinful indulgence.<sup>158</sup> Thus alcohol was a vice which consumed property, destroyed health, undermined respectability, destroyed domestic peace and tore man from his independence.<sup>159</sup> Through drinking, individuals obliterated their ‘sense of responsibility to family, country and to God.’<sup>160</sup> Therefore the consumption of such a ‘poison’ was an immoral act from which each individual had a moral duty to abstain. From the League’s

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<sup>155</sup> *ITLRB*, 1910, p.17.

<sup>156</sup> Shiman, p.43; McAllister, ‘Picturing the Demon Drink’, p.316.

<sup>157</sup> *BNL*, 29 January 1891.

<sup>158</sup> *ITLJ*, March 1864, p.37.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>160</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1863, p.10.

perspective the inability to abstain represented a lack of discipline, which it equated with a lack of self-control and respectability. Thus League rhetoric taught that by conforming to its standards of behaviour one would enhance one's moral standing. Such ideologies were common within moral suasion organisations. For instance the STL taught that 'moral restraint was vital for the soul and social status', while the Band of Hope taught that temperance was simply the right way to act according to accepted standards of conduct.<sup>161</sup> Through affiliation with the League individuals were encouraged to concentrate on their own moral advancement which would collectively accumulate in the moral advancement of society. This ideology was reflected in the League's motto, which held that personal abstinence would lead to national prohibition.

Secondly there was the social aspect to the ITL's moral lessons. The League taught that individuals had a responsibility to set an example in order to inspire acceptable standards of behaviour in those around them. Women were central to this lesson. Due to the belief in the powerful influence of Christian women, they were not only 'responsible' for their own abstinence but that of their families. The League taught that when a woman consumed alcohol, 'she whom nature and religion mark out as her children's truest, most unselfish guardian is thus rendered unfit to fill the mother's place.'<sup>162</sup> Therefore the ITL argued that it was a mother's moral duty to abstain and to induce her children to do likewise, thus leading them into an alcohol free adulthood.<sup>163</sup> Similar ideologies also focused on a women's responsibility to influence her husband: if a woman kept a clean and respectable house with the 'tempting odour of well-cooked food', their husband would have no desire to go to the pub.<sup>164</sup> Such arguments restricted women to the domestic sphere and enforced contemporary gender structures. These were also dependent on women having access to the money required to purchase such appetizing food which

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<sup>161</sup> Logan, p.67; McAllister, p.316.

<sup>162</sup> Byers, p.56.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid, p.57.

would not have been an easy option for many poor women. However the League's wealth arguments, which are discussed later in this chapter, 'avoided' this issue as they were aimed towards financial stability for the benefit of the family. In Andrea Ebel Brozyna's work on the constructions of female piety in Ulster temperance literature, she argued that the ITL conformed to contemporary evangelical gender norms.<sup>165</sup> Thus despite commenting on, and attempting to utilise the powerful influence of women, the League were careful that neither its teaching, nor the example it set, challenged a husband's position as the head of the family, or a man's position of authority in society. This was also reflected in the organisational structure of the BLTU. While the female members of the BLTU carried out the organisation's objectives, all meetings, and therefore decisions, were under the control of a male only panel.<sup>166</sup> Changes are evident over the course of the nineteenth century. By 1887 Mrs. John G Richardson was president of the BLTU.<sup>167</sup> Like Mrs. Richardson, a significant number of the BLTU's vice-presidents were family members of the core-leadership of the League. Examples include Miss. Richardson, Mrs. Mayne, Mrs. J. Pyper and Mrs. W.M. Scott were all involved in the BLTU. Even the female members of the core leadership of the ITL had strong familial ties. For instance Mrs. Byer's son, Sir John William Byers, was also a vice-president of the ITL.<sup>168</sup> Miss A.W. Richardson was the daughter of Mr. John Grubb Richardson, the owner of the Bessbrook Spinning Company in county Armagh and president of the ITL between 1887 and 1890. Her brother, Mr. John Richardson, also served as president of the ITL between 1899 and 1900.<sup>169</sup>

Conversely however the core leadership of the ITL also demonstrated progressive attitudes when it came to a women's right to vote. In 1887 they announced that 'although hitherto women have not been allowed to vote, temperance men would be willing to allow

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<sup>165</sup> Brozyna, 'The Cursed Cup Hath Cast her Down', pp.155–178.

<sup>166</sup> *BNL*, 16 January 1863.

<sup>167</sup> *BNL*, 27 April 1878.

<sup>168</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906 –1912.

<sup>169</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.2.

them to do so.’<sup>170</sup> This was in an attempt to extend the moral influence of women into the political sphere. By voting for temperance legislation women would be setting an example to their families. Undoubtedly the League believed that this would increase the votes for temperance legislation. As women were one of the most important tools employed by the ITL in their moral suasion operations, it is not surprising that its members wished to implement changes that could strengthen its legislative aims. This also highlights the link between the ITL and the women’s suffrage movement in Ireland. However as women such as Miss. Isabella Todd and Mrs. Margaret Byers were involved in the ITL this is not surprising. In February 1892 Miss Isabella Todd presided over the official opening of the Ashley Café on Donegall Street.<sup>171</sup> At this time Miss. Todd was secretary of the North of Ireland Society for Women’s Suffrage.<sup>172</sup> Using her at an official League ceremony was a clear indication of the ITL’s support for her political ideologies. Conversely it is also an indication of the conservative nature of these early suffrage campaigners, who saw votes as an extension of women’s moral influence within society, not as their right as equal citizens.

The League argued that there were two consequences of consuming alcohol; intemperance and drunkenness. Drunkenness was defined as the condition, which ‘deprives men of all sense and reason.’<sup>173</sup> Intemperance was defined as the state in which men were partially but not entirely deprived of their reasoning powers.<sup>174</sup> Yet while drunkenness was viewed as a deplorable condition, the League argued that it was ‘by no means so destructible to life and property’ as intemperance.<sup>175</sup> Moderation was inherently more sinful than drunkenness as it legitimised the consumption of alcohol and attributed to

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<sup>170</sup> BNL, 22 January 1886.

<sup>171</sup> BNL, 22 February 1892.

<sup>172</sup> “Miss Issbella Tod” by. Georgina Clinton and Linde Lunney, accessed 10 March 2016, <http://dib.cambridge.org.queens.ezp1.qub.ac.uk>.

<sup>173</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1863, p.10.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid.

<sup>175</sup> Ibid.



it a level of respectability of which it was not worthy.<sup>176</sup> Therefore the League also taught that citizens had a moral duty to commit to total abstinence and set an example to those around them. In particular the League argued that the middle and upper classes had a moral duty to set an example to those further down the social scale as they held that the working class had a pre-disposition towards drunkenness due to a 'moral weakness'. Thus while sobriety and self-sufficiency was the League's aim it did not believe that the working class had the intelligence to do this on their own. For instance in 1866 Haughton argued that

the illiterate still imagine that they derive some benefit from using alcoholic liquors'. If the wealthier members of society lead the way in the temperance reformation then 'the men in the humbler classes would gladly follow.'<sup>177</sup>

Evidently the ITL aimed to set an example from above to 'generate self-help from below.'<sup>178</sup> The League's lessons taught that the middle and upper classes had a responsibility to be the 'directors of the morals' of society.<sup>179</sup> Despite its claims, the League was not detached from the class prejudice that was common in the nineteenth century. While the League promoted an inclusive outlook, it also had a profound awareness of class and its relationship to drink. The desire that the middle and upper classes act as role models automatically gave them a superior role within the total abstinence movement. This highlights a condescending attitude within the League as well as a paternalistic element of the organisation. Duncan argues that in England 'awareness of class was central' to the drink debate. He states that 'from the outset, temperance was imbued with a distinct emphasis upon class and its relationship to character.'<sup>180</sup> Therefore despite its seemingly inclusive nature, League rhetoric reinforced contemporary social structures.

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<sup>176</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1863, p.91.

<sup>177</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1866, p.65.

<sup>178</sup> Harrison, p.115.

<sup>179</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1863, p.15.

<sup>180</sup> Duncan, p.26.

Finally the League taught that society had a moral obligation to enact temperance legislation and destroy the drink trade, which it viewed as Ireland's curse. In 1866 ITL member Mr. J.K. Tenner stated

that in view of the appalling evils which result from the sale and consumption of intoxicating liquors, not only to the immediate victims of intemperance, but to the community at large, at the earliest opportunity to bring forward a measure to remove the anomalies of the liquor traffic, and provide the community, on the principles of local government, with power to remove the evil when deemed necessary.<sup>181</sup>

The League fundamentally believed that the state was morally required to protect citizens from temptations. Thus it was a moral duty to permanently remove alcohol from society. From the League's perspective the current legislation meant that the state was failing to protect the weaker members of society as it punished the victim and not the crime.

According to ITL member Rev Robert Knox 'this weary round of sin and punishment hardens the heart, and rarely if ever, leads to reformation of life and character.'<sup>182</sup> This was the basis of the League's arguments for prohibition.

### *Health*

In addition to the moral lessons the ITL was founded on the belief that there was no reasonable explanation for the consumption of spirits as they were destructive to one's health. Total abstainers advanced this argument by applying it to all forms of alcohol. The ITL took an uncompromising stance on the issue. It rejected medical arguments, which backed the moderate use of alcohol, as 'senseless twaddle.'<sup>183</sup> In 1869 the League stated

our conclusion is that true medical science leaves little, if any, justification for alcoholic medication; and that such science, supplemented by Christian love, leaves 'no quarter' for it whatever. We earnestly commend this thought to Christian physicians and patients.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>181</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1866, p.55.

<sup>182</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1866, p.82.

<sup>183</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1866, p.14.

<sup>184</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1869, p.146.

Yet the executive of the League was aware of the difficult position they were in. In 1866 they stated that one of the great difficulties they faced was ‘in the opposition to be found in medical practice.’<sup>185</sup>

In the first edition of *The Journal*, the League published ‘The Four Stages of the Drunkard’s Progress, or the Physiological Descending Scale’.<sup>186</sup> This article reflected the ITL’s early teachings on alcohol and health. The lesson derived from this article was that by consuming alcohol individuals quickly moved through four stages: depression, insanity, paralysis and finally death. Early arguments such as these demonstrate the League’s strong opinions and such arguments were exclusive to staunch total abstinence reformers as the claims were not backed up with any scientific research.

Up until the late 1890s total abstiners went against the grain of contemporary medical opinion. In 1897 James Whyte published ‘Dialogues on Doctors and Drinking: Being An Examination of the Medical Case for Moderate Drinking’. This publication used articles by leading medical professionals, which had been published in the *Contemporary Review*, thus giving a clear indication of physician’s stance on the use of alcohol. The renowned English surgeon and pathologist Sir James Paget stated that the vast majority of medical professionals were in favour of moderation.<sup>187</sup> He explained that

with such evidence as we have that the habitual use of alcoholic drinks is generally beneficial, and that in the question between temperance and abstinence, the verdict should be in favour of temperance.<sup>188</sup>

Yet despite official opposition from the medical profession, the ITL had a number of individual medical professionals within the organisation. Some doctors did not see alcohol as essential for health/medicine and were questioning the health benefits of alcohol as early

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<sup>185</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1866, p.57.

<sup>186</sup> *ITLJ*, March 1863, p.67.

<sup>187</sup> H. Vere White, *Temperance Versus Total Abstinence* (Dublin, 1884), p.4.

<sup>188</sup> Anonymous, ‘Dialogues on Doctors and Drinking: Being An Examination of the Medical Case for ‘Moderate Drinking’ in *The Contemporary Review*, by. Dr. Sir James Paget and Eleven Others (Unknown: John Kingdom Publishing, 1897).

as the 1860s. The ITL had a number of doctors who wrote regularly for its column

‘Alcohol as Medicine’.<sup>189</sup> For example in Dr. J. Edmunds in 1869 stated in *The Journal*

I may tell you in one sentence that it is now generally admitted that alcohol never acts as a food at all – (hear) – that it is never used or consumed in the body at all, and that, therefore it cannot be placed in that category of alimentary substances which we find in the medicinal group, like cod liver oil, lime, or iron.<sup>190</sup>

In 1865 an article titled ‘Alcoholic Medication’ argued that ‘the ordinary drinking of intoxicants, under the name of medicine, is a fruitful source of disease, drunkenness and death.’<sup>191</sup> Unquestionably, members of the League thought that through perseverance they could persuade medical practitioners to abandon the use of alcohol and examine the matter on scientific grounds. This is reflected in the substantial numbers of appeals found in *The Journal*, to medical professionals to analyse the drink question on a scientific basis. The League’s arguments were based upon the belief that ‘total abstaining practitioners have a right to demand under what pretensions alcohol is to be considered as physic. What is its true value as a drug?’<sup>192</sup> Duncan has described this as the ‘medicalization of the drink problem.’<sup>193</sup> Due to the lack of scientific studies, society continued not to have any evidence upon which to base assessments of the detrimental effects of alcohol for health. By the end of the nineteenth century medical opinions were beginning to change. The Habitual Inebriates Bill passed in 1898 held that persons committed for a crime, and who could be proven to be habitual drunkards could be detained in an inebriate reformatory as opposed to a prison.<sup>194</sup> This demonstrated the state’s acknowledgment that there could be a medical cause for drunkenness.<sup>195</sup> Fundamentally it marked the point at which the perception of the drunkard began to change from one of a sinner to a victim and the

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<sup>189</sup> *ITLJ*, November 1869, p.169.

<sup>190</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1869, p.30.

<sup>191</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1865, p.145.

<sup>192</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1869, p.19.

<sup>193</sup> Duncan. R, *Panic Over the Pub? Drink and The First World War* (PhD Thesis, St Andrews University, 2008), p.47.

<sup>194</sup> *Habitual inebriates. A bill to provide for the treatment of habitual inebriates*, 1898, 187, Vol 4.

<sup>195</sup> Duncan p.47.

development of treatment for those who would later be viewed as alcoholics. Conor Reidy states that this replaced the

long held intolerance of the alcoholic as a social pariah to be defeated at all costs, more attention was paid to the notion of inebriety as a disease and the individual as a sufferer.<sup>196</sup>

By the early twentieth century the temperance movement was just a single component of the broader drive towards ‘progressive humanitarian social reform evident at the time.’<sup>197</sup>

Following this the first state sponsored inquiry into the physical effects of alcohol was conducted in 1904.<sup>198</sup> This was conducted throughout England, Ireland and Scotland and found that alcoholism was one of the principal causes of physical deterioration.<sup>199</sup> The League was an early advocate of these ideologies and was determined to advance scientific arguments for abstinence from its formation, demonstrating once again its progressive nature.

Following the report from the Physical Deterioration study, some health committees within urban councils instigated poster competitions in order to extend the findings of the throughout the community.<sup>200</sup> Mr. S.T. Mercier at this time was a councillor in the County Borough of Belfast and an executive member of the ITL. Taking inspiration from other urban councils, Mercier initiated a poster competition in Belfast after which they were displayed throughout the city. The posters clearly highlighted how alcohol could lead to disease, insanity and death.<sup>201</sup> The executive committee of the ITL used this report and their influential connections to the urban council in Belfast, in order to promote its teachings on detrimental relationship between alcohol and health. The League never diverged from its original opinion of the drink question and that opinion served as the basis for all its teaching in regards to health. The only difference was that the seemingly

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<sup>196</sup> Conor Reidy, *Criminal Irish Drunkards, The Inebriate Reformatory System 1900 –1920* (Dublin: The History Press Ireland DATE), p.25.

<sup>197</sup> Duncan, p.32.

<sup>198</sup> *Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration*, (1904), 32, XXXII.145.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.20.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

profound opinions which ran against the tide of contemporary medical opinion were, by the end of the century, backed up by scientific argument, which was in turn being endorsed by the state.

### *Wealth*

Throughout the total abstinence movement reformers equated drinking customs with poverty. The League taught that those who spent wages upon strong drink, diminished the ability to buy wholesome food and good clothing. Teachings stipulated that spending money on alcohol was a wasteful act, which would lead individuals, families and society into poverty.<sup>202</sup> When the money was needed for other, more vital provisions, spending money on alcohol was a sinful indulgence. Thrift was undoubtedly a valuable lesson for all classes. Within the ITL such teachings were indisputably designed for the working classes. In 1866 chairman Mr. John Lytle stated that he ‘hoped the time would come when the hard earnings of the working classes, instead of being spent in the public-houses, would be spent on their families.’<sup>203</sup> The League desired to ‘make men provident and teach and train in the ‘habits of forethought, carefulness, and economy.’<sup>204</sup> It wanted to teach the working class how to manage their money to enable them to provide for their own needs. In 1863 the League discussed the ‘vast importance of total abstainers amongst the humbler classes prudently making provisions for “a rainy day”’.<sup>205</sup> The League did not directly provide a service of this kind and instead forged connections with organisations that conducted work of this nature, such as the Independent Order of Rechabites (IOR). The relationship between the ITL and the IOR can be traced back to the early 1860s. The IOR was originally a moral suasion organisation, which increasingly grew to support prohibition.<sup>206</sup> The similarities to the ITLs own ideologies are evident. Through mutual contributions the

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<sup>202</sup> *ITLJ*, December 1863, p.127.

<sup>203</sup> *BNL*, 28 March 1866.

<sup>204</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1863, p.40.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>206</sup> Logan, p.180; R. Highet, *Rechabite History; A Record of the Origin, Rise and Progress of the Independent Order of Rechabites* (Manchester: n.p. 1936).

IOR provided a fund in order to support members in times of sickness, to procure medical attendance and to cover funeral expenses.<sup>207</sup> Thus the League used its propaganda to direct members to organisation that provided a service of a financial nature.

### *Nation*

McAllister indicates that in England the Band of Hope regarded 'national spending on drink...as a collective moral scandal'.<sup>208</sup> However it was not until the twentieth century and more specifically during the First World War, that such arguments gained prominence. Comparatively in Ireland this philosophy can be traced throughout temperance movement from 1829. In Ireland there was a correlation between temperance and national strength. This was perhaps most prominent during Father Mathew's Crusade when Daniel O'Connell made attempts to connect his Repeal movement with Father Mathew's crusade due to the benefits he could derive from the sober and respectable supporters. Also the Young Irelanders, a nationalist group which sought to create non-sectarian public opinion in Ireland, often argued that an Ireland which 'proved itself sober, disciplined and prosperous could not be denied self-government.'<sup>209</sup>

Similar to arguments found during Father Mathew's crusade, the core leadership of the ITL argued that the people of Ireland 'were intelligent and quiet, but give them drink and they were made turbulent and criminal.'<sup>210</sup> Thus abstinence was taught to be the key to unlocking Ireland's national strength and lessons implied that total abstinence would develop a self-controlled and respectable society. Citizens would be healthier and the wealth of the nation would increase which would decrease the numbers living in poverty, and provide the government with the funds necessary to make social improvements. However, as is discussed in the following chapter, for a largely Protestant movement with links to Unionism and the Orange Order, the 'collective' arguments put forth became

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<sup>207</sup> ITLJ, February 1863, p.40.

<sup>208</sup> McAllister, p.321.

<sup>209</sup> Malcolm, p.132.

<sup>210</sup> ITLJ, May 1866, p.55.

increasingly difficult as the Home Rule and the Irish Nationalist movement grew in the later nineteenth century. Following this the ITL had to be careful that the language it used for its national arguments, and the benefits Ireland could derive from sobriety, did not evoke connotations of the desire for a separate Irish government. In spite of this the League continued to evoke a 'soft' pride in its Irish identity and a desire to protect Irish citizens from drink. For instance in 1906 the League continued to describe voting for temperance legislation as 'an opportunity for doing something for the advancement of our beloved country. This is a serious responsibility, demanding the earnest thought of every true Irishman.'<sup>211</sup> The language used is indicative of national pride not commonly noted within the early twentieth century Protestant community. Unionist and Irish were not contradictory identities at that time, unlike later in the history of the island. The League was made up of Irish men and women who believed in the strength of the Union. Its ideologies envisioned a strong and sober Ireland, but which remained firmly within the United Kingdom.

The first section of the ITL's outreach program focused on four main lessons through the promotion of educational methods. In addition the ITL's outreach strategy also aimed to provide support structures for its members in an attempt to strengthen commitment to a teetotal lifestyle.

### Support

This area of the League's work focused on providing members with a range of alternatives to many traditional aspects of contemporary life. In this the League was endeavouring to provide followers with the tools necessary to avoid temptation. For instance, while the lectures and public meetings run by the ITL firstly provided followers with opportunities for learning they were also used to promote respectable forms of recreation. Therefore in addition to those events hosted by the League's agents, the ITL also hosted a number of guest lecturers, to attract more people to its events. Notable

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<sup>211</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.14.



examples included the series of lectures by Dr. Thomas Guthrie in August 1862.<sup>212</sup> Guthrie was a renowned Scottish philanthropist and reformer who reportedly ‘agitated the subject of temperance whenever opportunity offered.’<sup>213</sup> In an attempt to make the event accessible, the League ran a number of special trains for abstainers from outside Belfast.<sup>214</sup> Another guest lecturer, Rev Taylor, from San Francisco, was the main speaker in October 1862. This was followed by lectures from Dr. Lees, an influential temperance advocate from Leeds, in November of that same year.<sup>215</sup> In 1874 the League hosted the influential American temperance activist Mrs. Stewart in Belfast, who was the leader of the women’s temperance crusade in America.<sup>216</sup> Her visit to Belfast in 1874 was in order to promote the temperance reformation among women. Following this Miss. Todd and Mrs. Byers formed the Belfast Women’s Temperance Association, the chief object of which was ‘to banish intoxicating drinks as a beverage from the household.’<sup>217</sup> In addition the organisation set up homes for destitute women in the city and provided lessons in hygiene and cookery for working class ladies.<sup>218</sup> Although it was influenced by the arrival of Mrs. Stewart in Belfast, the BWTA was never as militant as its American counter-part. Nonetheless its formation in the 1870s, in addition to the IWTU in the 1890s suggests there are more similarities between the Irish and American movement that has previously been suggested. For example in the 1860s the BLTU was under the control of the male committee of the ITL thus representing a substantial degree of male influence within the early years of the women’s temperance movement in Ireland.<sup>219</sup> However the formation of the, women only,

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<sup>212</sup> *BNL*, 30 August 1862.

<sup>213</sup> Oliphant Smeath, ‘*Thomas Guthrie*’ *Famous Scots* (New York: Charles Scribner’s and Sons), p.160.

<sup>214</sup> *BNL*, 30 August 1862.

<sup>215</sup> *BNL*, 11 November 1862.

<sup>216</sup> *BNL*, 22 April 1876.

<sup>217</sup> Byers, p.54.

<sup>218</sup> “Miss Isabella Tod”.

<sup>219</sup> Nancy Hardesty, *Your Daughters Shall Prophesy: Revivalism and Feminism in the Age of Finney* (New York: Carlson Publishing, 1991); Jed Dannenbaum, ‘The Origins of Temperance Activism and Militancy among American Women’, in *Journal of Social History*, 15 (1981) pp.235-252.

IWTU represents women taking a leading role in the Irish temperance movement. Thus while the tactics may have differed to the American organisation the underlying empowerment of women was essentially the same.

In the 1880s Rev Canon Basil Wilberforce, who was described as a renowned temperance orator, was the ITL's guest lecturer.<sup>220</sup> As has been shown guest lecturers were typically influential names within the temperance, religious and philanthropic world and their inclusion undoubtedly drew attention to the ITL. In addition, by highlighting the wider and international support of the movement, the presence of guest lecturers no doubt reinforced and legitimised the League's principles. These events were typically held at church halls in Belfast. Victoria Hall, Fisherwick Place and May Street Presbyterian Church were the most commonly used locations in the 1860s. Lectures and meetings were not confined to Belfast. In 1877 the ITL advertised a series of lectures by guest speakers at Ballymena, Armagh and Enniskillen.<sup>221</sup> Large open-air meetings were also significant events organised by the ITL. In 1876 they reported that 'the attendance at these gatherings was very large and great interest was manifested towards every phase of the temperance movement.'<sup>222</sup> Such events were part of the League's summer programme. Typically these were used as public displays of support for the ITL's legislative aims, for instance at the large Permissive Bill meeting held in Belfast in April 1873.<sup>223</sup> In addition these events also infused a group mentality among members by visualising the total abstinence community that they were a part of.

Throughout the later nineteenth century the League ran regular entertainment evenings called 'Free Entertainments for the People' at the Working Men's Institute and Temperance Hall (WMITH) opened in Belfast on 15 November 1871.<sup>224</sup> These events included the reading of temperance tales and lectures with music and pictures. In addition

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<sup>220</sup> *BNL*, 23 June 1884.

<sup>221</sup> *BNL*, 10 August 1877.

<sup>222</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1876, p.54.

<sup>223</sup> *BNL*, 18 April 1873.

<sup>224</sup> *BNL*, 16 November 1877.

the League held working-class temperance meetings on Monday evenings at the WMITH.<sup>225</sup> Large public meetings and talks from guest lecturers were also held here specifically for the working class. For instance in 1874 a lecture from General Neal Dow, who had secured the passing of the Maine Law in America in 1851, was the highlight of the great public meeting held in the WMITH.<sup>226</sup> McIntosh argues that the idea behind the establishment of the WMITH in Belfast originated with ITL members.<sup>227</sup> Mr. Edward Allworthy, Mr. Thomas Gaffikin, Alexander S. Mayne, Mr. John Pyper, Mr. William Scott and Mr. Lawson Browne were members of both the executive committee of the League and the committee of the WMITH.<sup>228</sup> The workingmen's institute was 'the premier temperance leisure venue for the working class citizens of the town'.<sup>229</sup> While the formation of this building did not officially fall under the League's work, it had strong connection to it through an overlap of personnel. Thus members of the executive committee of the League were instrumental in providing the working class of Belfast with a leisure space that combined refreshment and education'.<sup>230</sup>

The opening of the League's buildings at Lombard Street in 1878 provided the League with its own premises to host such events.<sup>231</sup> Located in the centre of Belfast, the aesthetically pleasing building was no doubt a symbolic attempt to represent the power of the League and its growing place within Belfast society. The *Belfast-News Letter's* report on the official opening of the building stated that 'on the first floor are two large offices and a lecture hall which will seat above 200 hundred persons, provided with orchestra and gallery.'<sup>232</sup> Alongside the Lombard Café, there was a ladies parlour and 'private rooms for

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<sup>225</sup> *BNL*, 2 November 1885.

<sup>226</sup> *BNL*, 14 January 1874.

<sup>227</sup> McIntosh, p.5.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>230</sup> McIntosh, p.5.

<sup>231</sup> *BNL*, 12 September 1861.

<sup>232</sup> *BNL*, 31 January 1878.

gentlemen, fitted with writing tables.<sup>233</sup> The opening night of the building included a varied range of events. There was an exhibit of eastern curiosities, ranges of scientific instruments were laid out in another room and there was a performance by a local amateur orchestra. Furthermore there was an ‘interesting lecture on the nature and use of the telephone.’<sup>234</sup> The League wanted to provide its members with a building, which they could use to engage in learning and expanding their knowledge. Advertisements placed in the *Belfast News-Letter* show that concessions were made for the working classes during events. However the range of events at the WMITH for the working classes and the large events held at the Ulster Hall suggest that the Lombard Buildings aimed to promote acceptable pastimes for the more affluent members of society and to discourage recreational drinking at home. The League made provisions to include all classes with in its temperance movement however the social divide was clearly visible. Therefore while the League was inclusive in theory, the structures within the teetotal sub-culture mirrored the contemporary social structures.

On top of events that had a significant educational ethos, the ITL also provided leisure activities. The League’s social itinerary included a range of public soirees, exhibitions, bazaars and fairs, which provided respectable entertainment for all the family. A regular feature was the annual summer gala day and Band of Hope demonstration, which the League held in Botanic Gardens.<sup>235</sup> Reports indicate that bands played all day, the choir performed melodies, and there were games provided for the young. At the first event in 1860 the *Belfast News-Letter* reported,

At intervals balloons ascended with much éclat to the intense delight of the younger portion of the assemblage. The town band was present during the evening, and played a number of pieces in a very excellent style. At six o’clock the procession was reformed and marched back to the Garden gate in good order.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> *BNL*, 31 January 1878.

<sup>234</sup> *BNL*, 31 January 1878.

<sup>235</sup> *BNL*, 23 July 1876.

<sup>236</sup> *BNL*, 2 June 1860.

Other activities included kite races, skipping contests and wild flower shows.<sup>237</sup> Clearly such events had a fair-like atmosphere. As indicated these events always included a parade displaying ‘many beautiful and appropriate banners’ from each society.<sup>238</sup> Prior to the formation of the ITL, the BTAA and the Band of Hope held regular total abstinence parades in Ulster. In 1857 an estimated 4000 people took part in a Band of Hope demonstration at Portrush in County Antrim.<sup>239</sup> Numbers were no doubt increased by the reduced price excursion trips provided by the local railway company.<sup>240</sup> The extent of temperance activity provided a comprehensive social culture in which people could operate without ever coming into contact with alcohol. These become an alternative culture, one that could effectively challenge the traditional dominance of the pub or traditional amusements. In Cornwall, for instance, where Methodists formed a significant proportion of the local population, temperance parades were a tradition that sought to challenge contemporary social relations and legitimate abstainers place in a ‘constructed and immutable past’.<sup>241</sup> These events were a form of identity framing for the total abstinence community. By organizing parades and demonstrations, which were a traditional form of expression in the total abstinence movement, the executive of the League was attempting to foster a strong sub-culture, which had its own identity and customs.

In the early years of the League these demonstrations and parades stayed within Botanic Gardens. However during the 1860s such events began to command increasingly central locations in Belfast. In 1867 a large Saturday evening demonstration was held in a vacant lot between High Street and Rosemary Street in Belfast.<sup>242</sup> By the early twentieth century men, woman and children came out and lined the streets, promoting the benefits of

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<sup>237</sup> *BNL*, 27 August 1873.

<sup>238</sup> *BNL*, 2 June 1860.

<sup>239</sup> *BNL*, 18 July 1857.

<sup>240</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>241</sup> Harvey, Brace and Bailey, ‘Parading the Cornish Subject: Methodist Sunday School Parades and Tea Treats in West Cornwall c. 1830-1930’, *Journal of Historical Geography*, 33 (2007), p.7.

<sup>242</sup> *BNL*, 12 August 1867.

a temperate life.<sup>243</sup> In 1907 the League reported that a temperance demonstration from Ballynafeigh Athletic Grounds in Belfast included 5000 people who took part in the procession through the streets.<sup>244</sup> As Harvey, Brace and Bailey argue ‘by briefly monopolizing public space, parades enacted a vision of community and projected this to a wider audience.’<sup>245</sup>

The League regularly held concerts in the Ulster Hall in Belfast which was used as the local temperance hall for large events.<sup>246</sup> Performers included the Belfast Temperance Hand Bell Ringers and the ITL Adult Choir.<sup>247</sup> Concerts were impressive events. In 1873 the ITL’s Band of Hope agent, Mr. William Mayo, trained 500 children from the Band of Hope choirs to perform at a Christmas demonstration at the Ulster Hall.<sup>248</sup> By 1891 the ITL inaugurated the ‘Saturday Night Evening Concerts for the People’.<sup>249</sup> Temperance literature and pledge forms were given to all attending the concert. Due to the success of these events they were organised again the following year. At the opening event Mr William Wilkinson, the secretary of the League stated

it must be admitted that in a large industrial centre like Belfast, with such a teeming population of working people, the necessity for innocent and edifying amusement is very great...Saturday evening is a workingman’s evening and he looks for something to break the monotony of the week’s labours.<sup>250</sup>

Similar motives are visible in other events hosted by the League. For instance the ITL choir also provided a social function. Weekly practice was held at the WMITH, which indicates that this was aimed towards the working classes. Such social groups were no doubt formed in an attempt to fill leisure time with suitable activities. The League also encouraged annual band, sports and writing competitions, at which committee members or

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<sup>243</sup> *ITLRB*, 1907, p.8.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>245</sup> Harvey, Brace and Bailey, p.11.

<sup>246</sup> *BNL*, 27 April 1878.

<sup>247</sup> *BNL*, 30 March 1888.

<sup>248</sup> *BNL*, 8 June 1873.

<sup>249</sup> *BNL*, 28 January 1891.

<sup>250</sup> *BNL*, 2 February 1891.

agents presented awards.<sup>251</sup> Individual Band of Hope choirs competed in the Temperance Choir Challenge Shield, which was part of the Musical Festival held at the Ulster Hall each year.<sup>252</sup> In addition, the League conducted the annual Recitation Competition for Band of Hope groups. However such events were not only for children. In 1906 The League developed the Silver Challenge Shield for the adult darts competition. This was developed in the hope that it would provide an incentive to form clubs separate from those available in public houses. Competitions, parades, bazaars and fetes were typical ways to raise money, provide people with some enjoyment and give them a 'safe' and 'known' space in which to socialize with others of a similar outlook. Social and group events also reinforced the ITL's values of self-control and respectability and demonstrated that alcohol was not needed to live a full and varied lifestyle.

Aside from the recreational activities, the ITL's coffee movement provided an alternative to the common means of refreshment and sociability often provided by the public house. By the late nineteenth century the League had opened twenty two refreshment and reading rooms throughout the city. Although there was an extensive number of kiosks in Belfast these were for convenience not socializing therefore these new establishments provided 'cafes' for the working class just as the Lombard Café provided a similar space for the middle and upper classes.<sup>253</sup> At the opening of Ashley Café in 1892 Rev Dr. Spence stated that

Among a certain section of the community one would be inclined to believe that the tide of intemperance was swelling, by entering a neat café like this created some hope that men were not all going to the bad.<sup>254</sup>

The Farmers Rest, a café incorporating an adjoining yard for animals, located at Cromac Street in Belfast was also another important establishment opened by the ITL. Opened in 1892 the League argued that such an establishment was needed in Belfast so

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<sup>251</sup> *ITLRB*, 1907, p.12.

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>253</sup> *BNL*, 20 June 1887, 1 February 1892, 25 June 1894, 1 December 1896, 23 June 1898, 13 September 1899.

<sup>254</sup> *BNL*, 1 February 1892.

that farmers visiting the town did not need to go to the yards attached to public houses.<sup>255</sup>

The *Belfast News-Letter* reported that the Farmer's Rest was capable of providing service to an estimated 5000 people on a busy day. While this most likely represents an exaggeration, the £1300 extension to the establishment in 1900 suggests that there was a significant level of demand for its services.<sup>256</sup>

The coffee kiosks provided substantive food and refreshments for the working classes.<sup>257</sup> The kiosks at Donegall Quay and Great Victoria Street were open all-day and late into the night in order to provide an alternative source of refreshment to the public house.<sup>258</sup> Notably there was at least one kiosk in all the predominately working-class areas. Clearly the League was determined to make sobriety convenient in order to support commitment to total abstinence. Yet the memoir of Mr. Frank McGinley demonstrates that while the League's coffee kiosks continued to be used in working-class areas, by the twentieth century the reality was that the kiosks simply filled the role of the corner shop. Describing his life in the Ardoyne area of Belfast in 1910, Mr. Fredrick McGinley states:

no description of school life would be complete without that of the tuck shop. In our case it was the Irish Temperance League's Coffee stall across the road. Here we could purchase a "paris bun" or "a snow top" for a ha'penny and "black lumps" and "aniseed balls" with another.<sup>259</sup>

The League tried to extend the areas within which it provided alternative refreshments. From the 1870s the League formed a committee which worked to 'get the Railway boards to open, or allow to be opened, refreshment rooms without intoxicating drinks.'<sup>260</sup> In the early twentieth century the League was still trying to advance this work.<sup>261</sup> Non-alcoholic drinks were also provided at a range of fairs, agricultural shows and gardening events. For instance a refreshment room, with table service, was provided at

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<sup>255</sup> Minute Book, 2 February 1892.

<sup>256</sup> PRONI, Belfast, Young and Mackenzie estimate for the new stables at Cormac Street, D2194/55/5.

<sup>257</sup> McIntosh, p.2.

<sup>258</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1877, p.36; *BNL*, 21 February 1900.

<sup>259</sup> PRONI, Belfast, Printed memoir of Mr. Fredrick McGinley, T3580/1.

<sup>260</sup> Minute Book, 13 March 1877.

<sup>261</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906–1912.



the annual North East Agricultural Show.<sup>262</sup> The executive of the ITL also made arrangements to provide drinking water ‘on the route of procession on the 12 July each year’ in Belfast.<sup>263</sup> Temperance refreshments were also provided when the Assize court met in Co Antrim.<sup>264</sup> In addition similar provisions were made available to students at Queen’s University Belfast during term time.<sup>265</sup>

The League’s perception of society’s ‘detrimental’ drinking habits strengthened its desire to protect abstainers from temptation. The full calendar of social, family and educational events organised by the ITL, and the development of the coffee movement, while supporting and upholding temperance values, increasingly segregated abstainers from the dangerous intemperate society. It became progressively more important that members immersed themselves within the teetotal culture. By 1908 the League was vehement that individuals could not straddle both cultures; they had to pick a side. For example with reference to the darts clubs, the League stated that ‘no one is allowed to be a member of a club competing for this challenge shield if he is also a member of a club that meets in a public house.’<sup>266</sup> This mirrors events in the English temperance movement. Harrison argues that in England the perception of social drinking habits caused ‘the increasing self-consciousness of temperance reformers as a community.’<sup>267</sup> As Duncan states, ‘the physical separation compounded the ideological separation of the temperance movement from the mostly intemperate population.’<sup>268</sup> While the total abstinence culture was exclusive therefore, it was also active and provided members with a dynamic lifestyle. Fundamentally the League’s moral suasion work aimed ‘to induce people to become abstainers and help them to remain true to their convictions’.<sup>269</sup> The League wanted to

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<sup>262</sup> *BNL*, 18 June 1879.

<sup>263</sup> *ITLRB*, 1912, p.17.

<sup>264</sup> “Belfast Street Directory 1890”.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>266</sup> *ITLRB*, 1908, p.12.

<sup>267</sup> Duncan, p.28.

<sup>268</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>269</sup> *BNL*, 13 April 1892.

support its followers and use events to harness a strong social identity among abstainers.<sup>270</sup>

Undeniably the League encouraged a participatory temperance movement in the range of alternative forms of refreshment and recreation that it provided. The core leadership of the ITL envisioned, and tried to emulate, a utopian teetotal culture, in which through abstinence citizens were conservative, disciplined and respectable and thus protected from poverty, disease, and vice. The list of alternatives enabled members to socialise with like-minded individuals and through which people could live healthy and productive lives, free from temptation and the negative implications of alcohol consumption.

### Prevention

In addition to educating and supporting its members the ITL also aimed to conduct work which would prevent current members or indeed future generations from succumbing to the temptations of contemporary drinking customs. This section of the League's work had a strong focus on women and children.

The argument concerning the moral influence of women, put forward by the League underpinned the female character of this section of the League work. The members of the BLTU conducted much of the League's preventative work. The ITL placed middle-class women in a position to use their moral influence through home visits to the working classes. Mrs. Louisa Capper, secretary of the BLTU stated that

The seed sown may lie long before it germinates, but will bear fruit some day, whoever lives to see it: for it is a living seed and cannot perish. While in the meantime there are many incidental benefits obtained, most valuable in themselves, yet liable to be overlooked. In the visitation by our members, frequent opportunities occur of giving a word of advice, not only to the working man against spending his money for that which is not bread, but also of teaching the working man's wife how to make a home happy and comfortable.<sup>271</sup>

While visits were obviously part of the ITL's agenda of proselytization and recruitment, wives and mothers were also taught practical skills that were useful in everyday life. Thus Capper stated that

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<sup>270</sup> *BNL*, 25 August 1879.

<sup>271</sup> Louisa Capper, 'The Belfast Ladies' Temperance Union', in *Fifty Years Ago*, ed. by Fredrick Sherlock (Belfast: n.p. 1879), p.59.

there is more value attaching to showing a poor woman how to cut a child's frock, or cook her husband's dinner, than some people may imagine. In this way our visitors have gone about doing good and receiving in return the gratitude of many and the joy arising from seeing the pleasure of the Lord prosper in their hands.<sup>272</sup>

A stronger attempt to thwart intemperance was the unwavering certainty that children were key to an enduring social reformation. The children's temperance organisation the Band of Hope 'played a central role in this ambitious effort at cultural reconstruction.'<sup>273</sup> In 1847 Mr. Jabez Tunncliffe, a Baptist minister from Leeds, and Mrs. Anne Jane Carlile, co-founded the Band of Hope in Leeds.<sup>274</sup> The name was undoubtedly a reflection of the power reformers believed this work had. Lilian Lewis Shiman stated that the Band of Hope 'aimed to inculcate a new cultural identity in their young members, to facilitate the absorption of upwardly mobile working class families into respectable society.'<sup>275</sup> This clearly mirrors the ITLs visions for its moral suasion work. Also like the ITL, the BOH was interdenominational but with a strong Protestant ethos. Moreover in its early years Bands first spread through industrial cities and were typically formed in connection with local churches or Sunday Schools, and aimed at educating working class children.<sup>276</sup>

In his 1856 letter, Mayne noted that Mrs. Carlile had pledged to subscribe money so that a temperance agent could be employed in Ulster.<sup>277</sup> Subsequently this led to the employment of Mr. Revel, as discussed in Chapter One, as the first agent in Belfast who formed Bands of Hope. In December 1856 Revel held meetings at Berry Street Presbyterian Church, where Rev Hugh Hanna was minister, at Brown Street where Mayne taught at the Sunday school, and Townsend Street where Rev William Johnston was minister.<sup>278</sup> Like Mrs Carlile in England in the 1840s, much of Revel's work in Belfast in 1856 concentrated in travelling around Sunday Schools lecturing to children on the

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<sup>272</sup> Capper, p.59.

<sup>273</sup> Shiman, 'The Band of Hope Movement, p.49.

<sup>274</sup> McAllister, p.310.

<sup>275</sup> Shiman, p.49.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid, p.52.

<sup>277</sup> *BNL*, 23 January 1856.

<sup>278</sup> *BNL*, 24 December 1856.

dangers of alcohol and getting them to sign the pledge.<sup>279</sup> Shiman states that due to similar educational ideologies, Sunday Schools were among the first sponsors of the Band of Hope movement.<sup>280</sup> Evidently this was also the case in Ireland. Due to Revel's work and level of support from local Sunday Schools the Irish Band of Hope Union (IBHU) was formed in Belfast in 1856. In England unions had been instigated in order to form connections between the individual bands.<sup>281</sup> Unions could be based at a local, county or a national level. As Revel was forming local unions such as the Lisburn Band of Hope Union, it is clear that the Irish Band of Hope Union aimed to be a national one.<sup>282</sup>

At the third annual meeting of the IBHU held in Victoria Hall in 1859, Benson and Mayne were both present.<sup>283</sup> In addition James Haughton and Richard Allen were both listed as vice-presidents.<sup>284</sup> The ITL and the IBHU had the same aims and were in effect carrying out the same work. For instance in 1859 Benson formed 50 Bands of Hope. All the individuals named above, were members of the core leadership of the ITL highlighting the strong connection between the two organisations. Thus it is not surprising that the organisations amalgamated in 1860.<sup>285</sup> Following this the Irish Temperance League and Band of Hope Union, aimed to have two agents constantly at work, one to conduct the general work of the League, and another to concentrate on the Band of Hope.<sup>286</sup> In the 1860s this was unsuccessful and no regular Band of Hope agent was engaged. However both Pyper and Russell incorporated this work into their schedules, forming new Band of Hope societies throughout Ireland, lecturing and giving magic lantern shows at local Sunday Schools and issuing the pledge to children.<sup>287</sup> In England key figures in the total abstinence movement believed that youth based temperance work complemented the work

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<sup>279</sup> *BNL*, 15 November 1856; Shiman, p.53.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>281</sup> Shiman, p.54.

<sup>282</sup> *BNL*, 22 November 1856.

<sup>283</sup> *BNL*, 10 October 1859.

<sup>284</sup> Mayne, p.26.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>286</sup> Mayne, p.26.

<sup>287</sup> *BNL*, 17 March 1863; *BNL*, 25 May 1864; *BNL*, 13 March 1865.

with adults.<sup>288</sup> Similar ideologies are identifiable among the leadership of the ITL. For instance in 1866 Morgan stated that were parents were members of temperance societies, children should be enrolled in Sunday Schools. He argued that

Teachers are to large extent abstainers; this seems to be expected of them. The scholars are advised to be the same. I know one school (my own) where between two and three thousand of the young have from year to year signed their names to the temperance pledge. As a rule all Sunday Schools are engaged in this work and it is felt that they ought to be so.<sup>289</sup>

Clearly, as in England, the structure of the well-established Sunday Schools system in Ireland provided the ITL with a degree of structure for its work among children while its Band Of Hope department was in its infancy.

By 1866 progress was being made and the ITL stated that they hoped that they would once again be able to employ a Band of Hope agent.<sup>290</sup> In 1872 the League advertised for a permanent Band of Hope agent.<sup>291</sup> This may have been boosted by the formation of The Dublin and North of Ireland Band of Hope in 1870. For example Mayne states that

The Executive of the League beginning to think that the rival society...with two agents, might injure the League, or affect the funds, now offered to take charge of one of the Band of Hope agents and adopt him as their own.<sup>292</sup>

Subsequently from the early 1870s onwards the ITL continually had at least one agent who conducted Band of Hope work. Reports in the *Belfast-News Letter* indicate that there were many local and provincial Band of Hope societies.<sup>293</sup> The ITL agent Mr. B.T. Herring, who was employed in 1879, conducted his work with the same passion and efficiency as Revel had done in the 1850s. Herring restored the popular Band of Hope concerts held at the Ulster Hall. Music was traditionally one of the most important activities used by Bands of Hope, therefore a renewed emphasis on this work is unsurprising.<sup>294</sup> In 1879 the secretary, Mr. J. Orr stated that ‘the task of supplying the requirements of the numerous existing

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<sup>288</sup> McAllister, p.309.

<sup>289</sup> *BNL*, 10 January 1866.

<sup>290</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1866, p.57.

<sup>291</sup> *BNL*, 1 November 1872

<sup>292</sup> Mayne, p.30.

<sup>293</sup> *BNL*, 22 April 1882.

<sup>294</sup> Shiman, p.59.

Bands of Hope, and of promoting the formation of new ones is far beyond the power of any one agent'.<sup>295</sup>

In 1882 the ITL held a meeting at Lombard Hall in order to revitalise its Band of Hope work. Mr. F. Smith from London, who was present at the meeting, stated that he 'thought the ITL hardly realised the importance of fostering Bands of Hope'.<sup>296</sup> Considering the extent of the ITL's work, its coffee business, political work and literature, it was unrealistic to assume that all sections could be conducted at the same level of efficiency. The amalgamation with the IBHU and the desire to be a national union was too ambitious. Thus in the late nineteenth century the ITL recognized that it would be more effective in becoming a Belfast union. In 1892 the League formed the Belfast and Ballymacarret Band of Hope Union, which contained an estimated 10,000 members between six and twelve years old.<sup>297</sup> Many of these local societies regularly took part in the fairs, parades and concerts organised by the ITL.

Aside from the difficulties in conducting Band of Hope work, the ITL fundamentally believed that 'the young was the hope of the nation and that prevention was better than cure'.<sup>298</sup> Mr. R.A. Wilson, committee member of the ITL, articulated these values in 1863. He stated that when 'the young so far have been raised in the belief that moderate drinking was right and natural, moral reform cannot be expected until they are brought up differently'.<sup>299</sup> The material for children printed in *The Journal* throughout the later nineteenth century was used to highlight the dangers of drinking. For instance in 1863 the selections for the young included the tale 'The First Steps of Evil' about a young boy called Montgomery Rosco. Following the boy's descent into crime, readers were advised that

the first step on the path to disgrace and ruin was taken when he drew the glass of

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<sup>295</sup> *BNL*, 7 May 1879.

<sup>296</sup> *BNL*, 22 April 1882.

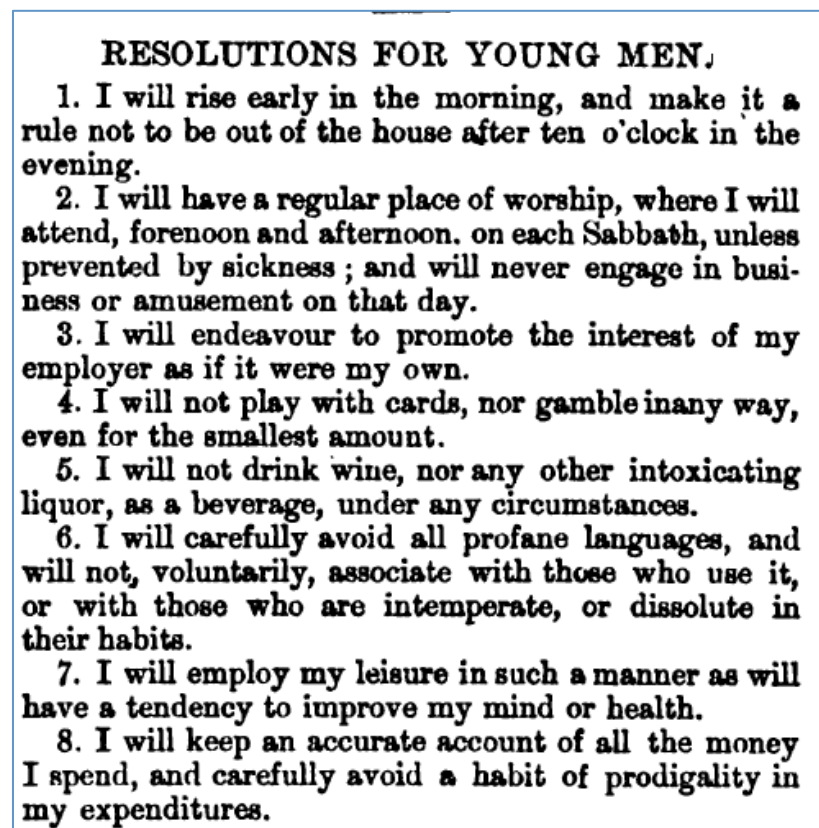
<sup>297</sup> *BNL*, 25 June 1894.

<sup>298</sup> *BNL*, 23 April 1867.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*

wine from his master's cask; and so fast did the habit of sin grow upon him, that the boy who at fifteen years old was the joy and blessing of his parents, and the favourite of all who knew him, before he was eighteen was on his way to prison, for falsehood, theft, and forgery! Be careful, then, young reader, how you take the first wrong step.<sup>300</sup>

As well as employing fear tactics regarding potential hazards of a life of drink, *The Journal* also emphasized core values that youth, in particular young men, should demonstrate and practice. In 1869 they published a set of 'resolutions' which they felt young men should adopt (see Figure 3.5).



**Figure 3.3: Resolutions for Young Men (Source: Irish Temperance League Journal, February 1869).**

These articulated a clear set of values, proposing young men should rise early, attend church regularly, avoid vice such as gambling and alcohol, and employ thrift when using their money. Undeniably the resolution epitomises the ITL's perception of a model citizen, which they believed was attainable through training children.

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<sup>300</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1863, p.11.

Like the adults, alternative forms of recreation organised by the ITL provided a range of respectable activities for the youth, while simultaneously teaching them about the dangers of alcohol.<sup>301</sup> By the twentieth century the League had an extensive youth program encompassing summer schools, choirs, bands, challenges, conferences and demonstrations throughout Ireland.<sup>302</sup> Such events helped to raise children within the traditions and values of the teetotal subculture. As was important in adult activities children's events were also used to foster a strong social identity.

The League believed that 'the importance of training the young with a view to their future responsibilities as citizens is recognised more and more each year'.<sup>303</sup> Moreover the League argued that

the children of today will be the citizens and voters of tomorrow, and the sound, earnest teaching received in their youth is bound to produce a rich harvest of temperance sentiment that will result in purer lives, happier homes and a stronger determination to roll away the reproach that clings to us as a nation in regard to the use of strong drink.<sup>304</sup>

A well-organized juvenile program in the early twentieth century, which primarily focused on day schools, replaced the League's Band of Hope work in the nineteenth century.<sup>305</sup> Changes such as these were affected by the increased educational opportunities brought about by the passing of the Education Act 1870.<sup>306</sup> Following this, temperance societies 'hired educated men, and former school teachers if possible, as school temperance lecturers.'<sup>307</sup>

In 1906 the Commissioners of National Education made it compulsory to teach Hygiene and Temperance in all national schools in Ireland. This was as a result of a campaign by the League and the Irish National Temperance Executive (INTE). A memorial was sent to the commissioners, signed by 28 Bishops, 42 Members of

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<sup>301</sup> *BNL*, 12 September 1861, 7 March 1870, 27 August 1873,

<sup>302</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906 – 1912.

<sup>303</sup> *ITLRB*, 1908, p.8.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>306</sup> Shiman, p.60.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*



Parliament, 1125 Clergy, 131 Magistrates, 154 Medical Doctors, 131 Country and Urban

Councillors and members of the Board of Guardians. The memorial stated

We urge the necessity of the systematic teaching of hygiene and of the nature and effects of alcohol, to train the rising generation to appreciate from childhood the nature of those influences, which injure physical and mental health.<sup>308</sup>

The ITL was modern in its approach to the education of alcohol and its links to physical and mental health. The League argued that children needed to understand the material from

a scientific and a practical standpoint, and that they understand clearly that alcohol is quite unnecessary to any healthy person, that it cannot be partaken of even in small quantities without deleterious results, and that personal abstinence is not only a safe and wise course to follow, but the only course supported by the highest medical science and expertise.<sup>309</sup>

Undeniably these matters were made more pressing by the Physical Deterioration Committee, which recommended practical training for teachers in relation to the detrimental effects of alcohol. The League made provision to support and train teachers to ensure that lessons were as efficient as possible. In 1909 a joint committee was formed with the Belfast Teachers Association over the new subject matter ‘Hygiene and Temperance’.<sup>310</sup> According to the League, teachers felt that it could not ‘[expect] that those who had no previous training in regard to these subjects can at once take them up fully and give regular scientific lessons.’<sup>311</sup> Following this the League produced a range of material, which would enable teachers to teach the subject matter more efficiently. The ‘24 Suggestive Lessons’ was a set of leaflets which contained lessons such as “How to get Good health”, “The Body as a Working Machine”, “The Home” and “Good and Bad Foods”.<sup>312</sup> Following this there was a high demand for the ITL due to the extent of its schoolwork. The League’s agents Mr. B.T. Herring and Mr. E.A. Atkinson both worked as school lecturers. In 1906 the ITL reported that

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<sup>308</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, pp.9-10.

<sup>309</sup> *ITLRB*, 1909, p.10.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid*, p.9.

<sup>311</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid*.

During the year 137 schools have been visited and 560 addresses delivered, illustrated by chemical experiments or diagrams, to an aggregate attendance of 62,468 scholars and teachers.<sup>313</sup>

However in 1910 the League reported to members ‘if your Executive were able to place two additional lecturers in the field, they would still be unable to avail themselves of all the openings, which are at present presented.’<sup>314</sup> In addition the League inaugurated an annual prize examination, which was open to pupils and teachers of day schools. The examination originated with the findings of Physical Deterioration, which the League clearly wanted taught in schools. Following a lecture given on the subject by the League’s agents, competitors were encouraged to write an essay on the contents. Prizes were then distributed to the best writers as an incentive for competing.<sup>315</sup> Due to its initial success this turned into an annual event. Clearly the League used this competition to ensure that teaching remained effective, and that the children gained an understanding of the subject.

The growing scientific research into the effects of drinking fostered a changing attitude towards alcohol. The scientific, medical and health arguments, which increasingly supported the League’s views about the harmful effects of alcohol consumption, enabled the League to place total abstinence values directly into schools. Rather than being a radical voice which was routinely marginalized within public discourse, ITL values were becoming part of the mainstream and in 1911 the Commissioners of National Education allowed the ITL’s prize examination to take place during school hours, thus solidifying the ITL’s temperance lessons as creditable educational material.<sup>316</sup> In addition the time previously dedicated to temperance in day schools was included in the time designated to religious instructions. This also changed and schools were allowed to bring in external teachers, or League agents, to talk about temperance at any time during school hours.<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.11.

<sup>314</sup> *ITLRB*, 1910, p.9.

<sup>315</sup> *ITLRB*, 1908, pp.9-10.

<sup>316</sup> *ITLRB*, 1911, p.10.

<sup>317</sup> *Ibid.*

This illustrates the growing secularisation of total abstinence to which the League had to adapt.

### Recovery

Finally recovery work was also included within the ITL's outreach strategy. By the end of the nineteenth century the idea of moral weakness was increasingly 'replaced by one which envisaged some type of corrective approach.'<sup>318</sup> The growing acceptance of collective responsibility for harmful behaviours, meant that society was increasingly coming into line with the ITL's values, yet the ITL did not have a large reformatory branch of its organisation. Due to the extent of the League's moral suasion work, and the issues faced with carrying out the Band of Hope work, the organisation clearly had to prioritize. Much like the preventative work the League used its connections to the women's movement, which did have a recovery dimension to its work in order to facilitate its mission. Interestingly the work carried out by its female associations was listed under 'Women's Work' within the League's annual reports.<sup>319</sup> Evidently the ITL believed that through its connections, such work fell under its organisation.

The Belfast Women's Temperance Association (BWTA) carried out the Prison-Gate Mission which was founded in 1876.<sup>320</sup> As part of the mission middle-class women waited at the prison to intercept the former inmates before they fell back into their previous intemperance habits. By 1879 twenty-four former inmates were comfortably housed, provided with work and under the supervision of a matron 'distinguished by an earnest Christian spirit.'<sup>321</sup> No address can be located for the home, however Reidy states that by the 1870s there were three such establishments operating in Belfast.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>318</sup> Reidy, p.25.

<sup>319</sup> *BNL*, 29 January 1896.

<sup>320</sup> The Women's Temperance Association was founded by Miss Isabella Tod in Belfast in 1874, Maria Luddy, *Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth-Century Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>321</sup> Rev Robert Knox, 'Belfast Prison-Gate Mission', in *Fifty Years Ago*, ed. by Fredrick Sherlock (Belfast, 1879) p.82.

<sup>322</sup> Reidy, p.101.

Rev Robert Knox was both vice president of the ITL and secretary of the Belfast Prison-Gate Mission. Knox published an article on the mission in 1879, which clearly expresses the ITL's opinions on recovery.

The State knows but one remedy - punishment. That same state, which encircles these women with temptation - authorizing a dram-shop at every corner - when they fall, lays hold of them and consigns them to the ignominious cell of the prison. Whatever influence this might have on a man's life and character, it is social ruin to women.<sup>323</sup>

For the ITL there was a way back from alcohol abuse, which from its perspective did not include the current methods of punishment, which were promoted by the state. However the ITL believed that the potential for recovery operated differently for men and women. For women, this quote suggests that it was impossible, by becoming drunks they became irreconcilably lost to social ruin. But for men, recovery did not preclude the occasional slip back into old habits. The League argued that due to the 'terrible temptation, which surround them when they leave prison' men must not be judged too severely if they fall temporarily into intemperance.<sup>324</sup>

By the twentieth century period there were two Prison-Gate Missions in Belfast, for Protestant men and women. There was also a similar one for Catholic men.<sup>325</sup> In 1903 IWTU set up The Lodge Retreat in Belfast. This was a voluntary inebriate retreat 'open to all Protestant females in Ireland.'<sup>326</sup> Although not officially connected to the League, there was also St Patrick's Reformatory for Roman Catholic men in Waterford opened in 1907 and a Reformatory for Roman Catholic Women in Wexford opened in 1909.<sup>327</sup> Furthermore the League tried to encourage the establishment of additional retreats throughout Ireland, although this was largely unsuccessful.<sup>328</sup> While such retreats were necessary, the voluntary ethos was a source of contention for the ITL. Therefore the League continued to agitate for greater action from the state in regards to the treatment of

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<sup>323</sup> Reidy, p.82.

<sup>324</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.38.

<sup>325</sup> Reidy, p.25.

<sup>326</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.21.

<sup>327</sup> Reidy, p.24.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid*.

habitual drunkards. Those found guilty under the Inebriate Act 1898 were sent to the State Reformatory located at Ennis Co Clare for a maximum of three years. During this time

Inmates are as far as possible given work that besides training them to habits of industry and regularity may enable them to earn an honest living when they leave the institution.<sup>329</sup>

In addition to these skills, inmates were taught lessons on self-control and better judgement. Theoretically this government provision was teaching and training the underclass in the same values promoted by the ITL.<sup>330</sup> Notably the League believed that by conforming to these core values individuals could recover from the vice of drunkenness. There was still a lack of understanding in regards to addiction. However the reformatory was not being used to its full capacity, which was a source of strife for both the ITL and the governor of the Ennis reformatory. In 1908 the League stated that

Many men and women, who are sent to prison through crimes arising from drunkenness would have a much better chance...of leading an upright life in future if they were sent to Ennis.<sup>331</sup>

The League tried to provide support in areas where it believed the government was failing. While much of its recovery work was conducted through connection to other organisation it did conduct one area of recovery work. In 1907 the Governor of the Ennis State Reformatory in his report to the Prison Board stated that the ITL deserved a particular mention in the assistance rendered to discharged inmates.<sup>332</sup> The League was instrumental in providing local support to those who had been discharged from the State Reformatory. According to Reidy there was a total of 100 men and women from Belfast committed to Ennis State Reformatory between 1900 and 1918.<sup>333</sup> Following their discharge the League's agent Miss Donaghy visited the homes of these who had been

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<sup>329</sup> *Twenty-ninth report of the General Prisons Board, Ireland*, (1907), 31, XXXI.539.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>331</sup> *ITLRB*, 1908, p.25.

<sup>332</sup> *ITLRB*, 1907, p.15.

<sup>333</sup> Reidy, C, 'How Barbed Wire became a Deterrent to Reform in a Suburban Villa: Belfast and the Inebriate Act, 1900- 1920' (paper presented at Drink and Temperance in Nineteenth Century Ireland Conference, PRONI, Belfast, 2016).

incarcerated at Ennis and returned home to Belfast.<sup>334</sup> This was an attempt to remove distance from the reformatory, as legitimising reason for falling back in to habits of intemperance.

## ***Conclusion***

Historians have suggested that in immigrant communities in Britain and America total abstinence societies were mainly used as a tool to control the Irish working-class population.<sup>335</sup> Due to the large immigrant populace in nineteenth century Belfast, and the parallel advancement of the total abstinence movement one could argue that there were strong similarities in Ulster. The middle class in Belfast wanted their new city to demonstrate civic pride and a prosperous and harmonious community.<sup>336</sup> This was against a backdrop of volatility of the new migrant population which drew attention to the stark reality of life in an industrial city. This led to a middle-class desire to impose orderly habits on those whose living conditions were perceived to encourage irregularity and disorder.<sup>337</sup> As is discussed in Chapter Two, the core leadership's perception of working-class drinking habits fuelled the League's passion for the destruction of alcohol. However to reduce the League's aim to middle-class control would fail to grasp the finer nuances of the temperance movement and its target audience.

The League essentially believed that anyone who did not live by the same values as its members, had to be enlightened on the error of their ways and this conviction applied to all social classes. As stated in *The Journal* in 1866 'teetotallers seldom lost a favourable opportunity of enlightening the community with regard to their principles.'<sup>338</sup> Through its moral suasion work, the ITL aimed to provide an alcohol-free sub-culture, within which all

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<sup>334</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.21.

<sup>335</sup> John Frick, *Theatre, Culture and Temperance Reform in Nineteenth Century America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.38; Rodger Swift, *Irish Migrants in Britain 1815- 1914* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2002), p.117.

<sup>336</sup> S. Connolly, 'Belfast, The Rise and Fall of a Civic Culture' in *Belfast, The Emerging City, 1850-1914*, ed. by Olwen Purdue (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2012), p.40.

<sup>337</sup> Connolly, *Priests and People*, p.173.

<sup>338</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1866, p.18.

classes could participate. This culture was not restricted to Belfast, and between 1858 and 1914 the ITL strove to become an all-Ireland organisation and provide citizens throughout the island with its teetotal ideologies. The ITL's moral suasion work produced an alternative culture within which citizens were protected from the temptations of contemporary lifestyle. Yet instead of being restrictive, the teetotal culture entailed an active lifestyle comprising its own educational material, a plentiful social calendar, teetotal products, as well as its own history, identity, and traditions. Fundamentally the teetotal sub-culture was based upon the self-denial of alcohol, but it also worked towards the self-improvement of its members. Once one made a commitment to a total abstinence lifestyle they were part of an active community, which had access to all of the elements within the ITL's outreach programme. The alternative products and recreations provided for the teetotal community produced tangible results within one's life. Thus instead of controlling its working-class members, by enabling the working classes to change their own lives the teetotal culture was essentially a source of empowerment.

Rhetorically the League's moral suasion agenda was a platform upon which all could unite. It incorporated a high and low level strategy within which all classes could participate. In reality however there was a limit to how far this rhetoric could go. The segregation between the classes noticeable within the League's structures indicates that there remained a strong social hierarchy within the ITL's utopian culture. The position of superiority members of the League assumed and the condescension towards their intemperate peers often caused tensions within the middle class. For instance the Recorder of Belfast in 1867 argued that total abstinence was the method used by cowards and firmly disagreed with the League's desire to close public houses.<sup>339</sup> Additionally in 1885 a Mr. C.J. Webb wrote to the *Belfast News-Letter*, offering the League some advice, which clearly articulates the reasons for middle class opposition. He stated 'my advice to the League is this... do not think that drunkenness, great and terrible through this evil may be,

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<sup>339</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1867, p.26.

is the only evil or danger that threatens this country.’<sup>340</sup> Nonetheless the ITL they felt they were armed with a clear justification to do right.<sup>341</sup>

Elizabeth Malcolm argues that the legislative fight for Sunday closing and prohibition preoccupied the Irish temperance movement in the nineteenth century.<sup>342</sup> As will be shown in the following chapter, the legislative fight for prohibition was a significant feature of the nineteenth and early twentieth-century temperance movement. However Malcolm’s argument fails to acknowledge the significant moral suasion movement that was conducted by the League in the same period. This research has highlighted the complex network that characterised the League’s moral suasion operations. As was demonstrated throughout this chapter, it was an intricate machine of many moving parts. The League’s moral suasion operations was the most successful section of its work, which was due to the financial assistance of the businessmen who embodied the ITL’s core leadership. By employing their skills, in addition to an uncompromising belief in the values of total abstinence, the League developed a strong professional strategy built upon a strong network of influential teetotallers and the development of a business profile that provided the organisation with financial stability. This created a durable foundation from which the League could conduct its outreach work, and, increasingly, its political work.

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<sup>340</sup> *BNL*, 8 December 1885.

<sup>341</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1866, p.18.

<sup>342</sup> Malcolm, p.151.



## Chapter Four

### Legislative Prohibition

*It [the ITL] desires also to assist in working all the means, which can be used for spreading Total Abstinence, and for sustaining so grand and noble a cause. It stops not at merely moral suasion but goes forward to seek for legal prohibition.*

*Irish Temperance League Journal* – February 1863

Over the course of the nineteenth century, this thesis has argued that temperance methods in Ireland evolved across a number of phases. Moderation and anti-spirits, which began the movement, soon gave way to more radical total abstinence. For both styles of temperance, moral suasion was the key methodology used to achieve their ends. Each had limited success, attracting support from some areas but never being able to eradicate negative habits around alcohol from the population as a whole. Some temperance reformers had turned their attention to legislation, that is, to persuading politicians to pass laws which would restrict various aspects of the drinks trade and the consumption of alcohol. In Ireland, prior to the formation of the ITL, efforts to achieve legislative change were poorly organized and lacked direction. The Belfast overseer movement of 1853-55 had some success but it was temporary and largely confined to a single location. A lack of unity between prohibitionists and those who supported the regulation of current licensing laws or simply the enactment of Sunday Closing made it difficult for UK-based groups dedicated to prohibition, like the UKA, to gain much traction in Ireland.

Average temperance campaigners in the 1850s viewed prohibition as outside the bounds of the temperance movement. The League's first mission statement, therefore, only highlighted 'moral suasion and all other lawful means'.<sup>1</sup> This simply meant using the full extent of existing licensing laws in order to control drinking as opposed to agitating for new legislation. However Mr. William M. Scott, first president of the League, suggested

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<sup>1</sup> Sherlock, p.98.

the addition of legislative prohibition at the ITLs first annual meeting in 1860.<sup>2</sup> After some initial debate the meeting resolved to include legislative prohibition in the objectives. As Sherlock stated in 1879 ‘from that time to the present the League has been distinguished amongst kindred associations by the success which has marked its career in the prohibitory movement.’<sup>3</sup>

The formation of the League in 1858 professionalised and advanced the objectives of the legislative temperance movement. It is this area of the ITL’s work which will be considered in this chapter. Firstly this chapter will provide a chronological outline of the legislation, which the ITL fought for between 1858 and 1914. Following this, the chapter will take a thematic approach to the ITL’s work. It will consider the main principles which underpinned the League’s desire to implement legislative prohibition. This chapter will then move on to discuss the strategies used by the League in pursuit of temperance legislation. Unlike other temperance movements in Britain, the ITL functioned within a distinctive political context in Ireland which separates the ITL from its counterparts in Britain and attention must therefore be given to it.

### ***Legislation***

As has been shown in Chapter One many of the ITL’s founding members were actively involved in the legislative stage of the Irish temperance movement. Thus by the 1860s members such as Mayne, Morgan and Johnston had a substantive working knowledge of temperance legislation and were beginning to argue for its reform and extension. The ITL did not officially start its legislative agitation until the Sunday closing campaign in 1863 when Mr. Joseph Somes brought an English Sunday Closing Bill before parliament. This Bill only applied to England but the League gave it its wholehearted support. The League stated that it desired to

see this important subject taken up with energy, and we earnestly hope that a Christian people will resolutely do their duty by respectfully demanding that the

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<sup>2</sup> Sherlock, p.98.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

Legislature of Christian Britain shall cease to legalise, or in any way sanction, the sale of intoxicating drinks on the Sabbath.<sup>4</sup>

If Sunday closing was legalised in England it would make the fight for an Irish bill much easier, but the Bill was defeated in June 1863 by a majority of 175.<sup>5</sup> The League formally noted its disgust at the defeat of this Bill in *The Journal*.<sup>6</sup> Once the returned votes were known, *The Journal* was quick to publicise that while the majority of English members were opposed to the Bill, the majority of Irish members had voted in its favour.<sup>7</sup> In a meeting in Liverpool earlier in 1863, Conservative MP Mr. T.B. Horsfall stated that he hoped 'to see some Irish members move that a bill be made applicable to Ireland.'<sup>8</sup> In reality the Irish majority was very small, with only twenty in favour and eighteen against.<sup>9</sup> Regardless this gave the ITL the impetus it needed to begin agitation for an Irish Sunday closing bill. Following a meeting at Mrs. Robinson's Temperance Hotel in Belfast, the League announced the formation of the Sunday Closing Association for Ireland (SCAI). The object of this association was to 'procure an Act of Parliament for the suppression of the Sunday Liquor traffic...analogous to the "Forbes Mackenzie" Act of Scotland'.<sup>10</sup> In this the League recognised that continuing to fight in connection with its English peers, for a British bill, would delay a Sunday closing bill for Ireland and thus it decided to focus exclusively on Ireland.<sup>11</sup> The SCAI believed that

there was every possibility that if a bill were laid before Parliament which would affect Ireland only, it would be passed, because a large section of the public would be in its favour, and many respectable traders, the clergy and a majority of the Irish members of Parliament were convinced of the utility of such measures.<sup>12</sup>

The desire to keep Sunday as a strict day of rest, and to extend that into many aspects of public and social life, was a distinct cultural movement in the nineteenth century which

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<sup>4</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1863, p.57.

<sup>5</sup> *ITLJ*, July 1863, p.112.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>7</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1864, p.158.

<sup>8</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1883, p.93.

<sup>9</sup> Malcolm, p.230; *ITLJ*, November 1863, p.172.

<sup>10</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1864, p.158.

<sup>11</sup> Malcolm, p.231.

<sup>12</sup> *BNL*, 15 September 1864.

became popular particularly within Protestant denominations. Starting out in England, these ideas soon spread to the Protestant population of Ireland, and became strongly supported in Ulster. The Leagues' Sunday closing arguments were fundamentally based on their understanding of the Biblical requirement to 'Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.'<sup>13</sup> The Biblical basis for Sunday closing meant the campaign for its implementation united temperance reformers across Ulster, regardless of their personal preference in regards to moderation or total abstinence, moral suasion or legislative prohibition.<sup>14</sup> Harrison argues that 'sabbatarians and temperance reformers combined in 1853 to secure' the success of the Forbes McKenzie Act in Scotland.<sup>15</sup> In order to foster this broad support in Ireland, the League focused on the inclusive nature of the Sunday closing fight and advised total abstainers 'to work with others and for the time to hold their distinctive principles in abeyance.'<sup>16</sup> Thus the League formed an association slightly removed from its official structures which temporarily mitigated tensions between moderationist and total abstainers in order to allow unity within the Sunday closing movement in Ireland. Yet the League made it clear, that from the perspective of its members, Sunday Closing was merely a stepping-stone on the road to prohibition.

While sabbatarianism may have been sufficient to attract and unite temperance reformers in Ulster, it was not enough to convince its more secular counterparts. The League was aware that religious arguments would not be enough to convince English politicians of the need for a separate Irish Sunday closing bill. The League suggested that

we might put the matter on high religious ground; but there is no necessity of telling religious people that it is disgraceful and unchristian to desecrate, in the foulest manner possible, the day of sacred rest. Irish religious people will as a matter of course, protest against Sunday liquor selling. We have to deal with men who are, or profess to be, politicians.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1863, p.172.

<sup>14</sup> Harrison, p.214.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p.238.

<sup>16</sup> Malcolm, p.196.

<sup>17</sup> *ITLJ*, July 1863, p.112.

It was a common belief within the ITL that religion and religious arguments were not enough on its own to effect temperance reform. While faith remained important to many of its members, the League was also willing to acknowledge and adopt increasingly secular methods. This fundamentally set the League apart from the prior sections of the Irish temperance movement all of which were driven by strong religious ideologies. Therefore when discussing the desire for an Irish Sunday closing bill in England the League focused on contemporary concerns such as the political situation in Ireland. Arguments stressed that Ireland was equipped ‘with a particular set of problems, which were not to be found in England.’<sup>18</sup> The League stated

where are criminal societies organised and where do they usually meet? In the public house on a Sunday. On that day people have more money and more leisure than on any other; and on that day they are provided by law with places in which they can exchange their money for inflamed passions, and where, over whiskey and cards...they can engage in conspiracies and arrange crimes.<sup>19</sup>

In a direct allusion to the Fenian movement, which had engaged in a number of abortive risings both in Ireland and in America, the ITL here suggests that the Irish pub culture was directly responsible for this revolutionary activity.<sup>20</sup> In an attempt to add weight to its arguments and show cross-community support for Sunday Closing, the ITL, in a deputation to conservative MP, Sir Hugh Cairns, quoted the Roman Catholic Primate of All Ireland. He stated that ‘If Sunday drinking were suppressed, we should hear of none of those abominable secret societies which have worked such mischief in this country.’<sup>21</sup> In England, post Hyde Park Riots, there was a fear that imposing temperance legislation would cause large-scale public disruption. The ITL was insinuating that in Ireland the opposite was true. If the government did not enact temperance legislation public disruption was more likely. While it was idealistic that secret nationalist societies would have been defeated simply through the closure of public houses on Sundays, these ideas show how

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<sup>18</sup> Malcolm, p.193.

<sup>19</sup> *ITLJ*, July 1863, p.112.

<sup>20</sup> Connolly, *Oxford Dictionary of Irish History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p.198.

<sup>21</sup> *ITLJ*, November 1864, p.172.

the League attempted to promote total abstinence as the remedy for contemporary national concerns. In addition the political connotations that the League evoked through its argument, and the demonstration of support from the wider religious community in Ireland, highlights the organisation's desire to justify the impact of a total abstinence lifestyle through quantifiable results.

Yet the Sunday Closing Association for Ireland was active only for a brief time. During the League's visit with Cairns, he expressed disappointment that the core leadership had not done enough work to 'prove the majority of our constituencies [were] in favour of the measure.'<sup>22</sup> Cairns argued that only 38 out of a possible 105 Irish members had actually voted on the Bill and their views could not be taken as evidence that there would be a substantive majority vote for an Irish bill.<sup>23</sup> Cairns ended the meeting on the following note

I may say this without any hesitation, that, if you could satisfy me that a measure of that kind would, on reasonable expectation, be passed into law from the strong support of the strong majority of the Irish members, I shall be glad to be the instrument of proposing it to Parliament, but only upon these terms.<sup>24</sup>

At a discussion of this meeting following the League's annual meeting it was agreed that the core leadership would 'try first how the Irish members would vote for the Bill'.<sup>25</sup> However the League undertook no research of this nature at this point. Malcolm argues that the 'association collapsed following the League's inability to find a sponsor for the Irish Bill.'<sup>26</sup> However this argument ignores the fact that Cairns would have sponsored the Bill had the League done the work necessary to prove there was a sufficient level of support for it.

In Belfast there was broad support for the Sunday closing some of which also came from publicans. For instance out of the 535 public houses in Belfast, 146 voluntarily closed

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<sup>22</sup> *ITLJ*, November 1864, p.173.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>25</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1865, p.75.

<sup>26</sup> Malcolm, p.195.

their doors on a Sunday.<sup>27</sup> Therefore considering the level of support for a Sunday Closing Bill that existed, it would not have been difficult to conduct this work. Nonetheless the League defended its failure to follow up on this by arguing that

as the voice of Ulster is already unanimously in favour of the God-honouring, man loving cause, it would be a useless expenditure of time and money to agitate in the north of Ireland.<sup>28</sup>

The ITL was of the opinion that as there was a substantial level of support in Ulster for a Sunday closing bill, conducting work of this nature would not be an efficient use of its time. Yet League's decision not to pursue a campaign in favour of an Irish Sunday closing bill was also a reflection of the fact that its core leadership regarded the Permissive Bill as the more important legislative fight.<sup>29</sup>

The Permissive Bill, which was designed by the UKA, proposed to prohibit the drink trade in areas where the majority of ratepayers voted for such measures. The 'permissivites', as those in opposition labelled them, sought licensing reform and not merely tighter regulations as the Sunday Closing Bill had done.<sup>30</sup> The ITL argued

the Lord Mayor, Recorder, and Magistrates prohibited the sale of drinks in the squares, terraces, and other places, where the wealthy resided. This was not free trade. Then, what the United Kingdom Alliance asked was that the middle and humbler classes get a voice in saying whether they would have the whisky shops in their own localities, to which the Magistrates now sent the publicans. The working-man had as good a right to this power of prohibition as the Lord Mayor.<sup>31</sup>

Following the formal connection with the UKA in 1862 the ITL worked to bring the provisions of the Permissive Bill before the people of Ireland.<sup>32</sup> Thus the ITL conducted its political campaign in connection with Scottish auxiliary of the UKA, the Scottish Permissive Bill and Temperance Association (SPBTA). Both organisation worked under the auspices of the UKA as part of its campaign to introduce the Permissive Bill into

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<sup>27</sup> *Index to the report from the Select Committee on the Sale of Liquors on Sunday (Ireland) Bill*, 1867-68 (280), 14, XIV.547, 697, p.599.

<sup>28</sup> Malcolm, p.196; *ITLJ*, February 1867, p.74.

<sup>29</sup> Malcolm, p.192.

<sup>30</sup> *BNL*, 26 February 1874.

<sup>31</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1863, p.57.

<sup>32</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1863, p.17.

parliament in 1864. During their travels the League's agents gave addresses on the nature of the Permissive Bill and collected resolutions of support.<sup>33</sup> Large-scale open-air meetings were held throughout Ireland. As was discussed in Chapter Three, these events were used to attract attention to the League and to give publicity to its legislative objectives, as well as being a demonstration of the extent of current support. Through its connections with the ITL and the SPBTA, the UKA was attempting to increase its agitation for the Permissive Bill throughout Britain. Therefore the League's growing distance from the Sunday closing campaign at this stage coincides with its move into a more substantial area of legislative agitation.

In 1864 UKA member and Liberal MP, Sir Wilfred Lawson introduced the Permissive Bill into parliament.<sup>34</sup> The Bill was defeated by 37 votes to 294 votes.<sup>35</sup> Between 1864 and 1878 the Permissive Bill was placed before parliament on twelve separate occasions yet was defeated every time. While the Bill was popularly known as Lawson's Permissive Bill, after Sir Wilfred Lawson, Liberal MP from England, from 1868 to 1878 Marriott Dalway's name was included in the list of those who sponsored it.<sup>36</sup> As Dalway was president of the League during these years, this demonstrated that the ITL were at the forefront of the Permissive Bill movement. Malcolm argues that due to the work of the League, the Permissive Bill, was more significant in Ulster than the rest of Ireland.<sup>37</sup>

During the 1860s and early 1870s the ITL clearly prioritised the Permissive Bill. T.W. Russell, disagreed with this focus and 'urged the formation of a "Sunday Closing Association".<sup>38</sup> This led to the formation of the Irish Association for the Closing of Public Houses on Sunday (IACPHS). Following this the Sunday Closing movement primarily

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<sup>33</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1863, pp.18-20.

<sup>34</sup> Malcolm, p.192.

<sup>35</sup> *Intoxicating Liquors*, 1864, (44), 2,11.35.

<sup>36</sup> *Permissive Prohibitory Liquor*, 1868, (10), 4, IV.285.

<sup>37</sup> Malcolm, p.226.

<sup>38</sup> *BNL*, 26 April 1870.



radiated from Dublin.<sup>39</sup> Individual members of the League, such as Russell, were involved in the IACPHS but this was in an individual capacity and not as League personnel. Furthermore, in 1868 a select committee was called to assess the necessity of a Sunday closing bill for Ireland. Vice-president of the League, Mr. Robert Lindsay was one of the witnesses called forward to give evidence in regards to Belfast. Mr. Lindsay's answers were very much in keeping with the ITL party line and its views on the need for legislation but at no point did he make reference to the League.<sup>40</sup> In 1870 during a discussion of Sunday closing the League advised that the movement was 'under the more immediate charge of the Sunday Closing Association of Dublin.'<sup>41</sup>

By the middle of the 1870s public opinion on Sunday closing had changed again. Once again the ITL was quick to utilize their connections to the Sunday Closing movement. In 1875 the League stated

while putting forth special efforts to advance the interest of the Permissive Bill your executive have been not less zealous, in promoting the growing agitation in favour of the total closing of public houses in Ireland on Sundays, a movement which the League has vigorously sustained since its institution in 1858.<sup>42</sup>

Despite the reality of minimal involvement in the Sunday Closing movement, the League utilized its connections and projected their personal work as official ITL activity. Thus from the mid-1870s the League was once again proactive in the Sunday closing movement. It held meetings and petitioned government in order to show the support for the Sunday closing bill in Ireland.

In the 1870s there was more support for total Sunday closing as opposed to the partial Bill that had been debated in the 1860s. In 1872 Sir Dominic Corrigan, the Liberal MP for Dublin, had introduced a total Sunday Closing Bill. The Bill was defeated in 1873 with the

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<sup>39</sup> At times this organisation was also referred to as The Irish Sunday Closing Association or the Sunday Closing Association of Dublin.

<sup>40</sup> *Sale of Liquors on Sunday (Ireland) Bill*.

<sup>41</sup> *BNL*, 26 April 1870.

<sup>42</sup> *BNL*, 2 April 1875.

Irish vote being three to one in favour of rejecting.<sup>43</sup> It was introduced again in 1874, this time by Professor Richard Smyth, the Liberal MP for Derry. The Bill was again defeated, however the Irish vote was growing as 42 Irish MP's voted in favour of the Sunday Closing Bill with no Ulster MP voting against.<sup>44</sup> Comparatively the Permissive Bill was also before Parliament in 1874. The parliamentary support for this Bill was also rising. For instance in 1874 the votes were 92 for, 318 against. Voting patterns reveal a significant level of support from Ulster politicians. For instance a total of 30 Irish MPs voted for the Permissive Bill, of these 19 were from Ulster. Only 6 Ulster MP's voted against the Bill.<sup>45</sup> It is clear that temperance legislation had support from a large majority of Ulster MPs, but that was not repeated across the country, where, MPs for southern constituencies repeatedly failed to endorse Permissive Bill legislation - as bills were repeatedly placed before parliament, the vote in their favour grew higher, but never anywhere near gaining a sufficient majority to ensure passage into law.

The rising vote for temperance legislation continued throughout the 1870s. However it was the Sunday Closing movement that was more successful. During this time the entire Sunday Closing movement represented a 'machinery of agitation.'<sup>46</sup> According to T.W. Russell

Ireland was roused, and from the Cove of Cork to the Causeway splendid battles were fought. Meetings convened by the publicans to oppose the bill were carried by storm, and resolutions approving the bill adopted thereat.<sup>47</sup>

The change in public interest in 'Sunday closing' can be analysed by taking the numbers of references to the term in the *Belfast News-Letter* between 1870 and 1880 (See Figure 4.1).

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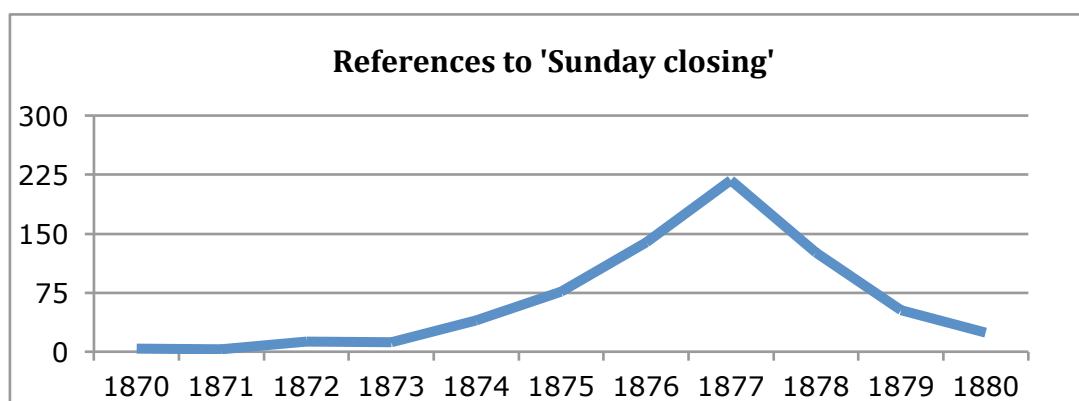
<sup>43</sup> T.W. Russell, 'The Sunday Closing Movement', in *Fifty Years Ago*, p.40.

<sup>44</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1874, pp.89-91.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>46</sup> Russell, p.42.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*



**Figure 4.1: References to ‘Sunday Closing’ in the *Belfast News-Letter* between 1870-1880 (Source: *Belfast News-Letter*).**

The peak over the mid to late 1870s correlates with the increased public support and agitation for the Bill. During this time the ITL was active in the agitation for the Irish Sunday Closing Bill. Public meetings and large demonstrations were held in the Ulster Hall in Belfast, in order to promote both Sunday Closing and the Permissive Bill.<sup>48</sup> At one of these meetings in March 1875 the *Belfast News-Letter* reported that ‘the attendance was very large, the building being crowded both in balcony and area.’<sup>49</sup> It was reported that the crowd consisted largely of workingmen, which indicates the level of popular support that the Sunday closing movement had in the 1870s. Due to the extensive public demand for Sunday closing in Ireland during this period, the Irish Sunday Closing Bill was passed in 1878.<sup>50</sup> However the Bill was only to be in place for a total of four years and would be removed in 1882 and the cities of Belfast, Dublin, Cork, Waterford and Limerick were exempt. In the League’s opinion the act was incomplete and they stated: ‘While thankful for any concession to the demands of the supporters of Sunday closing in Ireland we cannot accept the passing of a partial Sunday closing Bill.’<sup>51</sup> Therefore the League continued its agitation for the Sunday Closing Bill until it was made permanent in 1906.

<sup>48</sup> *BNL*, 2 April 1875.

<sup>49</sup> *BNL*, 11 March 1875.

<sup>50</sup> Malcolm, p.230.

<sup>51</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1878, p.54.

The failure of a British Permissive Bill by the end of the 1870s caused prohibitionists to push for separate measures in their respective areas. As early as 1874 Dalway suggested that if the Bill was not passed the League should ‘take matters into their own hands, and bring forward a separate Bill for Ireland.’<sup>52</sup> By the 1880s the League argued that the provisions laid out in the Permissive Bill ‘should be a local and not an imperial question.’<sup>53</sup> Following this the Permissive Bill movement changed from a centralised structure wanting to implement Imperial law, to a decentralised structure striving for a change in local law, which would eventually ‘accumulate’ in prohibition throughout Britain. Therefore for the remainder of the century and into the early twentieth century the emphasis focused on the fight for ‘local option’. This act gave one-tenth of voters in a town or district the power to call for a poll to choose between prohibition, a reduction in the number of licences or the termination of the granting of new licences.<sup>54</sup>

According to the *Belfast-News Letter* resolutions had been passed in Scotland, Wales, Cornwall, Durham, Yorkshire and Sunderland stating the intention to push for local option. There were discrepancies on the nuances of the issue with resolutions passed at country, county and city level. The growing emphasis on locality in the 1880s made the ITL reconsider its boundary in terms of Ireland.<sup>55</sup> Following this the League chose to push for local option at a provincial level as members of the League viewed Ulster as a distinct community within Ireland. Mr. William Wilkinson, secretary of the League, argued that ‘the nation was divided into division, counties, boroughs, parish and poor law unions. Each of these had a certain amount of power to legislate for their own community.’<sup>56</sup> The use of the term ‘their own community’ suggests that Wilkinson, like many from the ‘industrial’ province, viewed Ulster as a community separate from the rest of Ireland. Similar ideas are identifiable in a resolution passed by Rev Johnston in 1866, which stated:

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<sup>52</sup> *BNL*, 3 March 1874.

<sup>53</sup> *BNL*, 10 April 1885.

<sup>54</sup> *Liquor Traffic, Local Veto (Ulster)*, 1886, (142), 3, III.113.

<sup>55</sup> *BNL*, 10 April 1885.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

that considering the advanced state of public opinion in Ulster in regard to the need for temperance legislation, and to the justice and value of the principle of local option, this meeting believes that the time has come when a bill, giving the rate payers of this province a direct veto over the licensing of public houses for the common sale of intoxicating liquors, might with advantage be introduced into the House of Commons.<sup>57</sup>

Ulster had a different religious, political, economic and social reality than the rest of Ireland. In addition the growing issues of identity brought about by the rise of Irish Nationalism and the Home Rule movement increasingly segregated the northern province, which was perceived to have a stronger Unionist ethos than the rest of Ireland. Ulster also had a stronger temperance ethos throughout the nineteenth century and a stronger support for prohibitionist legislation than the other three provinces.

It was due to all these factors then, that in 1866 Mr. William Johnston, ITL member and Conservative MP, brought the Liquor Traffic (Local Veto) Ulster Bill before parliament.<sup>58</sup> The Liquor Traffic (Local Veto) Scotland was also before parliament in the same year again highlighting the close relationship between the ITL and its counterparts in Scotland.<sup>59</sup> The Local Veto Bill for Ulster was before Parliament in 1886 and 1887. Over this period William Johnston presented resolutions and petitions of support from a range of groups in Ulster, including the Ballymena Good Templars, Congregational churches in Belfast, Ballycraigy and Carnmoney, the Parish of Carrick and the Association of Irish Non-Subscribing Presbyterians.<sup>60</sup> Despite these measure to demonstrate the level of support in Ulster, the Bill was thrown out each year before the second reading.

The League nevertheless remained firm in its desire for prohibition and legislative change for all of Ireland. The campaign for an Ulster bill was the only time throughout the period in question that the ITL separated the northern province from the rest of Ireland in pursuit of legislation. It was not until 1917 that the ITL separated Ulster again following the formation of the Ulster Temperance Council (UTS) that fought for temperance

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<sup>57</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1886, p.46.

<sup>58</sup> *Liquor Traffic, Local Veto (Ulster)*, 1886, (142), 3, III.113.

<sup>59</sup> *Liquor Traffic, Local Veto (Scotland)*, 1886, (72), 3, III.105.

<sup>60</sup> *BNL*, 24 March 1886, 31 March 1887, 28 April 1887, 19 July 1887, 5 August 1887.

legislation in the province. In 1922 the UTS and the ITL merged to form the Irish Temperance Alliance which reflected the belief that the new Northern Ireland state would pass prohibition.<sup>61</sup> The League's decision to fight for an Ulster-only Bill in the late nineteenth century was attempted as a stepping-stone on the journey to national prohibition. When it was clear that the attempt to legislate for Ulster had failed, the League reverted to an all-Ireland approach. In 1888, William Johnston, in connection with T.W. Russell brought the Liquor Traffic Local Veto (Ireland) Bill before parliament. The Local Veto (Ireland) Bill was submitted to parliament eight times between 1888 and 1900. Like the Ulster Bill it was dropped every time before the second reading.<sup>62</sup> Scotland was the only part of Britain successfully to agitate for Local Option in 1913 with the passing of The Temperance Act Scotland.<sup>63</sup>

As has been shown in this section, between 1858 and 1914 the ITL's political work concentrated on Irish Sunday Closing, the Permissive Bill and the fight for Local Option. Only one out of the three main pieces of legislation which the ITL fought for was enacted in this period. Attempts to pass either the Permissive Bill and Local Option, which the League viewed as central to its prohibition movement, were both unsuccessful.

Table 4.2 below shows the licensing laws passed in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries relating to Ireland. Many of the acts relating to changes in licensing laws reflected an increasing general consensus on the need for regulation and were not a consequence of the ITL's agitation. In fact when many of these acts were passed the League concentrated on their shortcomings as opposed to the measures of control that it did enact. As Malcolm argues

the unwillingness to compromise demonstrated by the Irish temperance movement, and particularly by the Ulster section of it meant, that most of the few opportunities that arose for getting legislation through were lost.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> PRONI, Belfast, Records of Irish Temperance Organisations, D2663.

<sup>62</sup> *Liquor Traffic, Local Veto (Ireland)*, 1888, (25), 3, III.715.

<sup>63</sup> *Temperance (Scotland)*, 1913, (169), 5, 119.49.

<sup>64</sup> Malcolm, p.274.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Name of the Act</b>	<b>Provisions of the Act</b>
<b>1860</b>	Act passed prohibiting Excise issues of wine of Grocers' spirit licences in Ireland unless granted by magistrate	Regulated spirit licences in Ireland
<b>1864</b>	Irish Beer House Certificates Act	Applied 'on' licence closing house to 'off' licences, and prohibited excise or renewal of any 'off' beer licences until granted by a magistrate
<b>1871</b>	Licensed Brewers	Prohibited grant to licensed brewers of retail 'off' licences
<b>1877</b>	Beer House Act	Fixed rateable requirements, which closed 557 beer houses in Dublin alone.
<b>1878</b>	Irish Sunday Closing Act	Closed public-houses except in five cities - in which hours of sale were reduced
<b>1881</b>	Irish Land Act	Clause which prohibited agricultural tenants applying for liquor licences without consent of landlord
<b>1888</b>	Habitual Drunkards Act Amendment	Made 1879 act applicable to Ireland
<b>1898</b>	The Inebriates Act	Promoted Inebriate reformatories
<b>1902</b>	Irish Liquor Licence Suspensory Act	Suspended for five years the grant of additional licences, except for specific cases
<b>1904</b>	Irish Clubs Registration Act	Strong restrictions to serving liquor in clubs
<b>1905</b>	Irish Act	Closing pubs in Ireland on Christmas day
<b>1906</b>	Intoxicating Liquors (Ireland) Act	This made the Sunday Closing Act (1878) permanent, closing drink shops one hour earlier on Saturday and two hours earlier in the five exempt cities.
<b>1907</b>	Irish Licence Suspensory Act	This renewed the 1902 Act
<b>1908</b>	Irish Summary Jurisdiction Act	Protected household effects and tools from drunken spouses.

**Table 4.2: The licencing acts relating to Ireland in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Source: *ITLRB*, 1907, p.14)**

Before moving on to consider the unrelenting strategy that the ITL adopted in pursuit of its legislative aims, this chapter will first consider the principles behind this section of the League's work and its main objectives. The following section will also look at the main target for the League's legislative work which was the drink trade and anyone associated with it.

### ***Principles***

The League's desire for the legislative destruction of the drink trade was based upon four main principles. These were identified by Rev James Morgan's "Suppression of the Liquor Traffic" article, which was published in *The Journal* in 1863. Firstly the League maintained that 'intoxicating drinks are not required by the community for food.'<sup>65</sup> The League argued that no case could be put forward that proved the necessity of consuming alcohol. It was argued that 'those who have avoided or discontinued the use of them [alcoholic drinks] are the most vigorous and strong and long lived.'<sup>66</sup> From the League's perspective drink was not a necessary commodity, and therefore consumption of it was believed to be self-indulgent and a moral wrong. The self-indulgent view is particularly pertinent, considering the importance the League placed upon self-control.<sup>67</sup> Yet this argument was also speaking to the League's view on the medical use of alcohol, which it perceived as dubious. The League's progressive attitude towards science is demonstrated here as the organisation begged for advances to be made in the contemporary understanding of alcohol. The League stated

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<sup>65</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1863, p.62.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, p 62.

<sup>67</sup> *ITLJ*, March 1863, p.22.



We are willing to have the question tried by this test. We are confident the more fully facts can be ascertained, the stronger the argument would become for the entire disuse of intoxicating drinks.<sup>68</sup>

Secondly the League argued that as drink was not required as a food its consumption was ‘most dangerous and injurious’ to the body.<sup>69</sup> The League promoted the idea that the drink trade ‘should be placed under restrictions far more stringent than (had) ever been adopted in this country.’<sup>70</sup> The League viewed alcohol as a poison and argued that it should be regulated as such. The League argued

alcohol may be required as other poisons are, for various purposes, and means, therefore, must be used to provide and obtain it. But while a wise and tolerant Government puts it within the reach of the community for all necessary purposes, it is equally a duty to withhold it, and not allow it to come into the hands of those who seek and use it for purposes injurious to themselves and others.<sup>71</sup>

Thus it requested that ‘as the dispensers of poisons are bound and watched, and punished according to law so shall it be with the dispenser of alcohol.’<sup>72</sup> According to the League,

the necessary change is that it shall be placed under the charge of well-chosen and trusty servants of government, who shall have a good understanding and steadfast principle to dispose of it only for its legitimate use, and no personal pecuniary interest in the amount of its sale.<sup>73</sup>

The League’s first two arguments for legislative prohibition were underpinned by the moral and health arguments that were highlighted in Chapter Three. The third argument concerned the wealth of the nation. The League argued that the removal of the drink trade from Ireland ‘would be a benefit to the revenue of the land as well as the people.’<sup>74</sup> In other words, prohibition would lead to the economic improvement of Ireland. Morgan stated that

the expense arising out of intoxicating drinks is enormous in courts of law, officers to serve in them, prisons, poor houses, lunatic asylums, police and chaplains. We have seen it stated that two millions of paupers, drunkards, pickpockets, lunatics, and prisoners in the United Kingdom, required a staff of 4000 gaolers, 5000 chaplains, 40

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<sup>68</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1863, p.62.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1863, p.62.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p.61.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, p.62.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

judges, 80,000 lawyers and clerks, with 100,000 policemen to keep them in subjection. What is the expense of all these officers to the Government?<sup>75</sup>

From the League's perspective when all the negative effects of drinking customs were taken into consideration, they would outweigh any financial gains that the revenue of Ireland could derive from the drink trade. In the early twentieth century the League continued to show the expenditure on drink in comparison to the amount spent on asylums and prisons in Ireland.<sup>76</sup>

Finally the League argued that there was already a precedent for legislative control of the drink trade. Arguments suggested that when restrictive legislation had previously been tried on the drink question it was proven to be successful. The Forbes McKenzie Act, which had been introduced in Scotland ten years previously, was the precedent used to show the benefits of restrictive legislation.<sup>77</sup> Morgan stated

the publicans petitioned Parliament for an enquiry into the working of the act, hoping to prove it has been a failure, or perhaps expecting that some confusion might arise that would lead to its abolition. Their request for inquiry was granted but it has turned out to be with vengeance upon them. The results have been shown to be most satisfactory in the improved morality and prosperity of the country.<sup>78</sup>

In addition the Maine Law, described in Chapter One, was also used by the ITL to show a precedent for the legislative control of alcohol. In 1869 the League stated

The wisdom of prohibiting the liquor traffic has been abundantly demonstrated by the beneficial operation of the Maine Liquor Law in many of the States of America, and by the happy results, which have followed the prohibition of the sale of intoxicants in several towns and many parishes of Great Britain and Ireland.<sup>79</sup>

This quote is an exaggeration of the effects of legislative prohibition in America and the influence it had in Britain and Ireland. However it demonstrates the romanticized perception of enforced abstinence, which was the basis of the League's legislative work.

As has been shown these four arguments were the basis upon which the ITL's legislative campaign was built. These reflected the League's fundamental values of

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<sup>75</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1863, p.62.

<sup>76</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, pp.44-45.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>78</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1863, p.62.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

morality, health and wealth. Unlike its moral suasion work, which was strongly focused on personal abstinence however, these arguments were concerned with the social and economic improvement of the nation. This belief was revealed in the League's motto 'Personal Abstinence and National Prohibition'.<sup>80</sup>

Prohibition, by this stage was the ultimate goal for total abstinence reformers. However by the end of the 1850s the prohibition movement throughout Britain and Ireland had come to the realisation that the development of prohibition through the accumulation of partial legislation was more realistically achievable.<sup>81</sup> It was within this context that both the SPBTA, and the ITL were formed in 1858.<sup>82</sup> As was shown in Chapter One the UKA had a number of auxiliary branches in Ireland. At the end of 1858 the Dublin auxiliary remained active, yet the Belfast auxiliary was waning. UKA agents were still touring in Belfast but meetings had an, 'exceedingly small' attendance.<sup>83</sup> However, the lack of activity from the Belfast auxiliary of the UKA should not be looked at as a failing branch. Rather they represented an organisation in a period of transition. As stated before the Belfast Auxiliary of the UKA became the legislative arm of the ITL. This was formalised in 1862 when the League changed its name to the Irish Temperance League, Band of Hope and Permissive Bill Association. The merger is unsurprising considering the overlap of individuals such as Johnston, Morgan, and Haughton within both the Belfast Auxiliary of the UKA and the League in the 1850s. The regular presence of Mr. J.H. Raper, parliamentary agent for the UKA, at ITL meetings between the 1860s and 1880s further indicates that the Belfast auxiliary was absorbed by the ITL.<sup>84</sup>

The League believed that the failure to supplement moral suasion with legislation ultimately damaged the effectiveness of the Irish temperance movement. Arguments

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<sup>80</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1867, p.45.

<sup>81</sup> Harrison, p.198.

<sup>82</sup> The SPBTA was first official prohibition movement in Scotland and was the UKA auxiliary in that area, Logan, p.26.

<sup>83</sup> *BNL*, 4 May 1859.

<sup>84</sup> *BNL*, 7 April 1863, 17 April 1884.

stipulated that there had been

princely and persistent efforts to free these lands from the demoralizing influence of a trade that is at constant war with civilisation, and is a most deadly enemy to the elevation of our race. It is in vain that we put forth exertions in other directions for the improvement of our social conditions, until this impediment to prosperity and happiness be removed out of our way.<sup>85</sup>

In addition the League considered the failure to see prohibition during the legislative stage as an acceptable goal for moral suasion temperance reformers as another factor in the lack of lasting reform. The League promoted prohibitionist arguments as the ultimate form of prevention and support. Only a change of the law would prevent individuals from falling into the evil habit of strong drink, and maintain the vision highlighted by a moral suasion agenda.<sup>86</sup> This effectively made prohibition an appropriate objective for moral suasion temperance reformers in Ireland. Thus the formation of the ITL marked the fusion of the moral suasion, teetotal and the prohibition movements in Ireland.

James Haughton identified the objective of the League's legislative work in *The Journal* in 1863. It stated that this work

contemplated the removal of this great nuisance, alcohol, as many other nuisances are removed by the power of the legislator. It seeks to overthrow the traffic in intoxicating liquors.<sup>87</sup>

While an optimistic belief that society could be convinced to turn away from alcohol defined the League's moral suasion operations, its legislative operations represented a more realistic attitude that many members of society would remain indifferent or actively opposed to its total abstinence cause unless they were obliged by law to change their behaviour.<sup>88</sup> This was an attempt at forcing a certain set of values on to those members of society, whom remained opposed to the pleas of prohibitionists. Subsequently the main target for the League's legislative branch was any person, or business, which it perceived as maintaining the trade in alcohol. Underpinning this was an attempt by members of the

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<sup>85</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1865, p.82.

<sup>86</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1863, p.40.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, p.9.

<sup>88</sup> Harrison, p.204; *ITLJ*, May 1863, p.13.

League to force their peers into setting an appropriate example to the working classes. The top of this list was the drink manufacturer. From the League's perspective a manufacturer was a person who produced articles of value and was thus a benefactor to his country.

According to the League

the maker of alcoholic liquors does the reverse of all this. He takes things of the highest value to mankind – food that would strengthen and invigorate – and he changes them into a poison, which weakens and injures all who partake of it without exception.<sup>89</sup>

Public houses were also targeted by the League's legislative aims as these establishments were viewed as 'centres of demoralization and destruction.'<sup>90</sup> According to the League

no plea...can be set up for the public houses on the ground of necessity. The community do not need intoxicating drinks for food, and a paternal government is not under any necessity to provide them.<sup>91</sup>

The League argued that publicans should be treated in the same way other dealers were and held accountable for the sale of poisons. According to the League, public houses were the source of all social ills. The League stated

Go through the community and where you find poverty and rags, and misery, in how many instances have all these arisen from the public house? In our large towns especially where employment is abundant, this is the one and almost exclusive source of wretchedness.<sup>92</sup>

Moderationists and drunkards were also pursued through the League's legislative crusade. However the League typically viewed drunkards as the victims of the precedent set by businessmen involved in the drink trade, and the moderationist drinking culture of the middle and upper classes. The League argued that prohibition would liberate the working classes, in particular the drunkards, from a predatory business class set on making profit from their misery. The League made attempts to prove that it had popular working class support for its legislative restriction on drinking customs. An article published in the

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<sup>89</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1865, p.83.

<sup>90</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1863, p.62.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

January 1864 issue of *The Journal* was written by ‘a working man’, but no name is given therefore it is uncertain whether or not this was true.<sup>93</sup> According to the implied author the working classes could not

emancipate themselves; emphatically the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. Freedom must be given to them, if ever they are to be free; if given to them they would be the first to feel, and ere long to rejoice in its effects.<sup>94</sup>

The language in this quote was clearly used to symbolise the links between alcohol and slavery. Alcohol was the shackle from which the middle classes had a moral or social duty to free the working classes. Abstinence was promoted as the ultimate form of freedom. In the article the author expresses to readers that the working class were tired waiting for the effects of moral suasion to kick in when the ‘simple act of touching a piece of sheepskin with the point of a sceptre, could at any time put an end to the strife and restore a measure of peace to the community.’<sup>95</sup> Notably the language used in this quote was to symbolise the formal process of completing a piece of legislation.

As stated previously the ITL wanted to force abstinence onto those who ignored or were opposed to its principles. In defence of the League’s methods Haughton stated in 1864

The truth is, that men forced to be sober do very often acquire a strong liking for sobriety; its fruits are so pleasant and profitable, that they give it their hearty preferences and thus it becomes their “virtue” in the truest sense of the thing.<sup>96</sup>

This is a clear attempt to justify the League’s efforts to force society to conform to its standard of acceptable behaviour. However, like the ITL’s moral suasion work, to relegate its ideologies to a simple desire to control would do an injustice to its fundamental beliefs in the transformative power of total abstinence. The League wanted to impose a value system on society. This was based upon self-denial and self-respect, which it argued would enable the social advancement all citizens. Chapter Three demonstrated the total

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<sup>93</sup> *ITLJ*, January 1864, p.11.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, p.12.

<sup>96</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1864, p.82.

abstinence culture that the League developed throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. While this was based upon the rejection of alcohol, the focus was on the happy, healthy and active lifestyle of its members. Therefore through a legislative coup the League attempted to enforce a specific moral agenda on to society. From the ITL's perspective controlling an individual's right to consume a poison was a small price to pay when one considered the tangible benefits from sobriety. This reflects the ITLs progressive attitude in terms of protecting citizens from detrimental habits.

Regardless of its rhetoric however legislative prohibition was an interference with individual freedoms.<sup>97</sup> Contemporarily this was not considered an acceptable code of conduct. Thus Harrison argues that in England the UKA 'had to make a case for the most drastic infringements to individual liberty.'<sup>98</sup> Therefore a strong feature of prohibitionist political theory was that the state could never be morally indifferent and thus intervention in detrimental behaviours was legitimate.<sup>99</sup> The League fundamentally believed that the distinction between 'civilized life and savages' involved a common agreement between government and citizens 'to adopt and submit to a code of wise and equitable laws.'<sup>100</sup> This was viewed as essential to the wellbeing and prosperity of the community.<sup>101</sup> This argument were based upon the idea that the 'government of the country often interposes and authoritatively forbids what it considers to be injurious to the interest of the community.'<sup>102</sup> According to Harrison the

temperance movement was founded partly to fill the gap created by the retreat of the state from the supervision of morality; but by the 1850s temperance reformers were demanding that the state should resume its former role.<sup>103</sup>

This belief pattern extends to the ITL. In his 1856 letter Mayne clearly attributes the need for the temperance movement to government neglect.<sup>104</sup> By 1863 the ITL was claiming

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<sup>97</sup> Harrison, p.202.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1863, p 61.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1869, p.49.

<sup>102</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1863, p.62.

<sup>103</sup> Harrison, p.204.

that ‘it was the duty of the paternal government to protect’ its citizens.’<sup>105</sup> Morgan in his 1863 article stated that ‘it is a growing conviction that it is the duty of our legislators to consider what is for the interests of the community in this matter and to determine and act accordingly.’<sup>106</sup> As with previous temperance legislation, the prohibitionist movement worked tirelessly to prove that there was precedent for state intervention. For instance it used nineteenth century Anti-Slavery and Corn Laws to show an example for state limitations on personal freedoms. The League made comparisons to legislative interference in gambling-houses, which were viewed as a source of temptation. From the League’s perspective as there was a precedent for the control of activities which were harmful, to self and others, alcohol should be treated in the same manner. Due to the ITL's belief that public houses were a source of temptation, it is clear to see how it was drawing parallels. Thus the League argued that ‘as the law now is, it is widely and constantly used for the great hurt of the community. It is, therefore the duty of the Legislature to interpose, and to do so authoritatively.’<sup>107</sup>

This section has highlighted the key principles that drove the ITL’s desire for the legislative destruction of the drink trade. Fundamentally it was based upon the belief that alcohol was detrimental to the health, wealth and morality of individuals and the nation. Additionally from the League’s perspective there was a precedent for the legislative control of the drink trade, and for state intervention in harmful activities. Therefore the question of the legislative control in the late nineteenth century was ‘one of degree merely and not of principle.’<sup>108</sup> This chapter will now move on to consider the strategy that the ITL employed within its legislative work between 1858 and 1914.

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<sup>104</sup> *BNL*, 26 January 1856.

<sup>105</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1863, p.63.

<sup>106</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1863, p.63.

<sup>107</sup> *Ibid*, p.61.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid*, p.62.



## ***Strategy***

Fundamentally the League's political strategy was aimed at persuading individuals to support temperance legislation 'first, for their own benefit; secondly as a public example; and thirdly to facilitate the passing of a national enactment.'<sup>109</sup> The League believed that once the benefits of a controlled drink trade were shown at a local level, this would force the state to intervene in the national drink trade and pass temperance legislation, which would ultimately lead to prohibition. The ITL's political campaigns were based upon a three point trajectory from individuals to local government and finally to the state.

The first point of the ITL's political strategy was the development of wide public support for temperance legislation. As will be shown the League used its moral suasion work to increase support for total abstinence. Rhetorically this would invoke the perception of a strong political base, which the League could then use as a weapon in the fight for legislation.

### **Public Agitation**

The League's attempt at political mobilisation was based upon public agitation. It conducted a vigorous campaign in order to educate the public on the 'necessity that exists for the suppression of the ungodly and inhuman liquor traffic'.<sup>110</sup> A series of large open-air meetings in April 1863 marked the start of the ITL's agitation throughout Ireland for the UKA's 1864 Permissive Bill. This set the precedent for the methods which the League continued to employ throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. From the early 1860s lectures and annual demonstration began to include information and/or resolutions of support for temperance legislation.<sup>111</sup> Large open-air Permissive Bill meetings were held at which bands played and banners of support were flew, evoking the character of a political rally.<sup>112</sup> Numerous articles in *The Journal* educated total abstainers

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<sup>109</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1863, p.126.

<sup>110</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1869, p.50.

<sup>111</sup> *ITLJ*, July 1863, p.113.

<sup>112</sup> *BNL*, 8 August 1876.

on the necessity and benefit of the legal suppression of the drink trade in Ireland. Articles in *The Journal* included 'Prohibition of the Sale of Intoxicating Drink on a Sunday', 'The Spirit Trade in Belfast' and 'The Permissive Bill of the United Kingdom Alliance'.<sup>113</sup> Posters and pamphlets were also printed highlighting the need for legislation.<sup>114</sup> The League also conducted door-to-door canvasses in order to bring the principles of the Permissive Bill directly to the people, as well as, to collect signatures for memorials and petitions.<sup>115</sup> Due to the efficiency of its work and its auxiliary societies, by the 1870s the prohibition movement headed by the UKA was an impressive 'machine for influencing public opinion' throughout Britain.<sup>116</sup> Harrison states that progress was most marked in the midlands, the northern border counties, Monmouthshire in Wales and in Ireland.<sup>117</sup> The UKA's success in Ireland is primarily attributable to the work of the ITL as it was the governing body for Permissive Bill agitation in that area.

Harrison argues that the UKA concentrated its work in areas where the organisation was already strong. Concluding therefore that if the UKA

had really aimed to convert the whole country it should have imitated the Anti-Corn Law League and sent lecturers into the heart of enemy territory, that is rural areas of the south east.<sup>118</sup>

However this argument does not relate to the UKA's work in Ireland under the auspice of the League. The ITL was a central movement, strongly focused in Ulster with Belfast representing the focal point of the organisation. Yet the core leadership made attempts to expand into areas where the ITL was weak or unknown throughout the later nineteenth century. The meetings in April 1863 were held in Dublin, Newry, Dundalk, Lurgan and Portadown.<sup>119</sup> These meetings demonstrate an attempt to expand support for the League and the Permissive Bill into new locations. However the ITL did not face the same

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<sup>113</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1863, p.23; *ITLJ*, October 1863, p.158; *ITLJ*, December 1863, p.189.

<sup>114</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906-1912.

<sup>115</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1864, p.96; *BNL*, 18 April 1881.

<sup>116</sup> Harrison, p.256.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1863, p.58.

challenges as the UKA had in England. In the early 1860s there was no other national temperance body in Ireland, whereas in England there was five concurrent major temperance organisations.<sup>120</sup> As it was an essential monopoly, the ITL was able to expand without the same constrictions as other national organisations. However the growth of political temperance work in Dublin in the late 1860s, in terms of the development of the legislative IPBA and the ISCA, correlates with a decrease in the ITL's work in that area. Evidently there was a growing competitiveness in the Irish temperance movement during this period. Subsequently instead of spending time and energy on organisational competition, the ITL retreated from that area and concentrated its work into other localities.

While geographical boundaries organised temperance work in England, it was religious boundaries which served that purpose in Ireland. For instance as was shown in Chapter Two, even when the League conducted work in traditionally Catholic areas in Ireland, such as the western counties in Connaught, its connection to the area was usually through a local Protestant church. As a pan-Protestant movement, it used established Protestant denominational networks in order to develop its all-Ireland status. Therefore it is possible to relate Harrison's argument, that the UKA was focused on areas in which it was already strong, to the ITL. If the League had wanted to convert the whole country it should have made a greater effort to make connections to its Catholic temperance counterparts and the extensive network of the Catholic Church throughout Ireland. However as stated in Chapter Three, the strong Protestant character of the ITL and the connection of local temperance societies to Protestant denominations, made it unlikely that Catholics would have been willing to join due to suspicions of proselytism. Yet the core leadership of the ITL were never opposed to Catholic involvement in its movement. In fact, as was shown previously, it was not uncommon for the League to use Catholic connections within deputations

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<sup>120</sup> Harrison, p.257.

Lectures and public meetings officially fell under the ITL's moral suasion work. Following the start of its political agitation these were also used by the ITL in order to give the impression of large-scale support for prohibitionist ideologies. From the 1850s the UKA had used these events as a public display of its power and support.<sup>121</sup> It also 'assured those present of the strength and righteousness of their cause'.<sup>122</sup> Following the meetings in April 1863 it was reported in *The Journal* that the people were 'enthusiastic in their approval of Prohibition principles...and a mighty impetus [had] been given to the movement in Ireland in favour of the Permissive Bill.'<sup>123</sup> By October of 1863 the ITL claimed that

from our experience in carrying on the temperance agitation, we find that the people of this island are very generally in favour of such a measure. They believe the making and selling of such liquors to be a bad business, inimical to the best interests of the country, and they desire to see a power vested in the people of each parish or district by which the ruinous trade shall be immediately prohibited.<sup>124</sup>

The large numbers in attendance at League events such as the annual demonstration in Botanic Gardens, concerts, lectures etc. and the range of ages, classes and denominations that this included, automatically gave the impression of broad support for the ITL, which suggested support for its legislative aims. In its rhetoric the League was attempting to present other areas of work as signifying widespread support for prohibition, which demonstrated the efficacy of its marketing and publicity. Yet it was also a weakness, as public support for a social agenda incorporated by the League's moral suasion work, did not directly relate to support for its political ambitions. For instance the failure of the Permissive Bill and the Local Option legislation, despite many resolutions of support and the ability to fill the Ulster Hall during meetings, demonstrated that legislative movement did not have the political backing that the League projected. Harrison argues that in England the efficiency with which the UKA conducted its agitation 'deceived both

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<sup>121</sup> Harrison, p.257.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, p.227.

<sup>123</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1863, p.58.

<sup>124</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1863, p.159.

themselves and the public as to the real strength of public support for their policy.’<sup>125</sup>

Despite the gap between the rhetoric and reality of the ITL’s political support, its presence in Belfast lead to the formation of the Belfast Licensed Vintner’s (BLVA) Association in 1861.<sup>126</sup> This organisation, formed for the protection of the interests of the drinks trade, was part of a larger movement, which also had branches in Dublin and Cork.<sup>127</sup> In Belfast the BLVA was made up of publicans, with an increasingly middle class, Catholic character throughout the later nineteenth century.<sup>128</sup> The activities of the BLVA were kept secret throughout the 1860s amid fears that the organisation was being watched, presumably by members of the League.<sup>129</sup> However there was a marked increase in the BLVA’s work from October 1872, which correlates with the increased agitation and support for the Sunday Closing Bill in Ireland. From this point on the BLVA was organised by a Board of Management which included thirteen members of the association.<sup>130</sup> Monthly meeting were held at the BLVA’s offices located at 20 Rosemary Street in Belfast. Annual meetings were also held here in addition to special meetings which were called as and when necessary.<sup>131</sup> The BLVA argued that

no one could deny the right or propriety of a body of men engaged in legitimate trade forming themselves into an association for the protection of their interests and more especially in their case, when that duty was imposed by calumnies of the basest character being constantly hurled against them.<sup>132</sup>

The ideologies expressed in this statement demonstrate the target of the ITL’s legislative work fighting back against the temperance movement in order to protect its livelihood. The members of the BLVA wanted to protect their trade and interests while the ITL wanted to force those opposed to their ideas into conformity. Both organisations needed to increase

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<sup>125</sup> Harrison, p.227.

<sup>126</sup> *BNL*, 17 July 1861.

<sup>127</sup> Waldron, ‘A Triumph of Publicanism’.

<sup>128</sup> Peter Gribbon, *The Origins of Ulster Unionism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1875), p.92.

<sup>129</sup> *BNL*, 17 July 1861.

<sup>130</sup> *BNL*, 23 September 1873.

<sup>131</sup> *BNL*, 24 July 1876.

<sup>132</sup> *BNL*, 31 October 1872

popular support for their movements, therefore each society maintained that they fought for the protection of the working classes and morals of society. As has been shown throughout this thesis the ITL promoted the tangible results the working classes could gain from sobriety. In response the BLVA argued that if the temperance movement continued to destroy pubs, working men would be pushed into shebeens and illegal drinking, which would produce more detrimental effects than the current system.<sup>133</sup>

A letter published in the *Belfast News-Letter* in August 1876 provides some perspective on the relationship between the ITL, the BLVA, and the working classes in Belfast. In the late 1870s there was a desire to give the workingmen of Belfast an opportunity of showing in public their approval or disapproval of the Sunday Closing movement. However the anonymous author of the letter discussed the difficulties of such an event indicating a belief that due to both the ITL and the BLVA ‘a meeting composed of such leaders, speakers and shouters, the working class vote would be nothing short of a sham.’<sup>134</sup> A number of things can be derived from this statement. First of all, neither the ITL nor the BLVA had any real understanding of the position which the Belfast working classes took in regards to Sunday Closing. Many of the League events did have a level of working-class attendance which no doubt enhanced its belief in broad support from this level of society. Comparatively the density of public houses in working class areas in Belfast as discussed in Chapter One, and the perceived drinking habits of the working classes no doubt convinced the BLVA that it had the support from this class. Had temperance or the trade actually taken time to consider the position of the working classes the reality may have weakened their fight. On the other had it could have strengthened their position as the fight would have concentrated on popular measures of reform.

Secondly it is clear from the letter that the aggression between the temperance movement and the trade consumed the drink question in nineteenth century Belfast. This is

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<sup>133</sup> *BNL*, 2 May 1890.

<sup>134</sup> *BNL*, 8 August 1876.

identifiable in the military language that members of each organisation used in the fight. For example the ITL used terms such as the ‘temperance army’, while the BLVA spoke of the ‘warfare’ it was required to wage on its enemies.<sup>135</sup> Both the ITL and the BLVA were guided by resentment and the need to beat the opposition, instead of actually listening to the needs of the people they claimed to be fighting for. The author of the letter offered a suggestion, which ‘would give a true index of the Belfast mind on this subject.’ It was proposed to appoint a committee of twelve representatives, six from ITL and six from the BLVA, to organise two meetings in Belfast to be held at the same time. One meeting was to be in support of the Sunday Closing Bill and one in opposition to it. Whichever had the biggest audience would give a clear indication of the level of public support. Considering the number of meetings that both organisations held, this would not have been difficult to organise. While this would not have been a fair measure of support, as both sides would have made attempts to pack its audience, the suggestion by the author demonstrates a need to infuse a sense of reality in to the proceedings, as opposed to the continuation of a rhetorical fight.

However neither organisation was prepared to take the risk and maintained a policy of zealous rhetoric. Therefore once the League was armed with perceived public support it used this as a leverage to maintain resistance towards contemporary licensing practice and agitate for reform at local government level.

## Resistance

From the League’s perspective the authorities failed to enforce the contemporary licensing system and were therefore responsible for the ‘ever increasing traffic in intoxicating liquors.’<sup>136</sup> The League argued that

if Parliament did not create our public-house system, it has fostered, and nurtured, and invested it with a respectability in common estimation to which this traffic could never otherwise have attained.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1863, p.1; *BNL*, 9 January 1879.

<sup>136</sup> *ITLJ*, January 1869, p.12.

<sup>137</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1865, p.92.

In nineteenth-century Ireland there were fourteen different types of alcohol licences which an individual could apply for. The most common and contentious of these were the public house, spirit-grocer, wholesale beer and beer retailer's licences.<sup>138</sup> Licences were issued 'upon production by the applicant of a certificate granted by the recorder or the magistrate at quarter sessions.'<sup>139</sup> The certificate was required to give reference to the character of the applicant, information on the suitability of the premises to be a public house, and the likelihood of future licensed premises in the area. Licences were required to be renewed each year dependent upon certification of the good character of the publican and the orderly conduct of his house during the preceding twelve months.<sup>140</sup> However in a deputation in 1861 the executive committee of the League

brought before the chairman and magistrates at quarter sessions, the very serious evil which arises from the laxity of licensing systems and from sanctioning the opening of additional public houses in Belfast.<sup>141</sup>

The League maintained that the greater the number of facilities, the greater the demand for alcohol. It believed that the common sale of intoxicating drinks led to disorder, disease, poverty, lunacy and crime. Therefore from the League's perspective there was no legitimate argument for the necessity of additional licences or public houses in Belfast. Essentially the League wanted magistrates to stop granting or renewing licences. This deputation marked the start of the ITL's resistance to contemporary licensing practices. Following this the ITL maintained opposition to new licenses at the Quarter Sessions and Assize courts throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The League's activism for the Permissive Bill was also important here. Licensing powers lay with local magistrates; it was this practice that the Permissive Bill wanted to change as it aimed to place licensing powers in the hands of the local electorate. Therefore the opposition to licences was an attempt at highlighting the inadequacies of current practice in an attempt to

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<sup>138</sup> Malcolm, p.206.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

<sup>140</sup> Malcolm, pp.206- 207.

<sup>141</sup> *BNL*, 23 April 1861.



legitimise prohibitionist arguments for legislative reform through the passing of the Permissive Bill. The League argued that if the Permissive Bill were passed ‘the act of licensing, which now rests with the will of irresponsible persons, would then depend on the action or inaction of the people’.<sup>142</sup>

The League also argued that publicans and drink manufactures acquired success from the ‘fools’ pennies’.<sup>143</sup> Thus it viewed attempts in the late nineteenth century, to turn public houses into a reputable industry as an effort to legitimise greed and indulgence under the auspice of business. This was the basis of the League’s opposition to licences. The application for the Gin Palace on the corner of North and John Street in Belfast, by Mr William McDermot, 1863 exemplifies the League’s issues with the growing respectability of the drink trade. The alluring décor and atmosphere of this establishment suggests that it was modelled on the gin palaces which were popular with the middle and upper classes in London. Clearly this was an attempt to change middle class drinking habits, as it offered them a respectable establishment that they could frequent as opposed to drinking at home. Subsequently the League was concerned with level of temptation this ‘respectable’ establishment would render to the more affluent members of society. For instance in a memorial sent to magistrates in 1863 the League argued that ‘the external attractions and internal embellishments of such concerns render them peculiarly seductive to the more respectable classes.’<sup>144</sup> Underpinning this concern for the League was a fear that an increase in middle-class drinking in public houses would perceptively place a level of respectability on the behaviour, which would in turn legitimise public house drinking customs among the working classes. Thus following the application for the licence, the League argued that ‘there are people in Belfast who have more cash than conscience, and who look at every transaction through their pocket.’<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1863, p.126.

<sup>143</sup> *ITLJ*, August 1865, p.126.

<sup>144</sup> *BNL*, 21 October 1863.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*.

Yet much of the League's opposition to this single establishment of a gin palace rested on the fact that it would be located in a 'neighbourhood, which already had seventy-one public houses.'<sup>146</sup> In opposition to this establishment the League obtained 'a memorial signed by 777 adult inhabitants of the immediate neighbourhood' which objected to the palace being granted a licence.<sup>147</sup> Areas in the neighbourhood included North Street, Carrick Hill and Millfield, which were perceived by the middle classes to be some of the most deprived areas in Belfast. This demonstrates the efficiency with which the League mobilised inhabitants of working class areas into a political weapon. The memorial was presented at the Quarter Sessions in Belfast 1863 by an ITL deputation which included Rev Robert Hannay (Christ Church), Rev Wm. Johnston (Townsend Street Presbyterian Church), Rev John Mecredy (Academy Street Church), Rev William Gorman (Donegall Square Wesleyan Church) and Rev James Morgan. Clearly this was an attempt to use the League's influential local connections. The deputation used to present the memorial and the signatures within was an attempt to prove there was pan-Protestant support for the rejection of the Gin Palace. The suggests that ITL had took inspiration from Cairns suggestion the previous year, to prove the level of support it had for legislation, and were prepared to put in the work when it felt it was necessary.

Unsurprisingly the representation for the owners of the Gin Palace rejected the ITL opposition and raised concerns as to the manner in which the League obtained the signatures. Mr. Alexander O'Rourke, solicitor for the applicant, asked the League's deputation 'how many persons signed the memorial without knowing what they were signing and how long they hawked for signatures.'<sup>148</sup> The chairman of the Quarter Sessions was not swayed by this and stated that such questions were unnecessary due to the respectability of the clergymen who presented the memorial. Evidently the ITL's tactics worked and due to the religious and highly respectable nature of the deputation the

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<sup>146</sup> *ITLJ*, August 1863, p.126.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid*, p.127.

<sup>148</sup> *BNL*, 4 July 1864.

authorities did not question the League's methods. However O'Rourke continued to maintain that the League manipulated individuals into signing the memorial, and that the use of clergymen gave a false disinclination to question their methods. Without any further information it is hard to conclude whether O'Rourke was correct in his suspicions of the League, or if it was merely a tactic used to defend his client. However such a suggestion are not implausible considering the questionable tactics which the League employed to discredit MP's in the late nineteenth century, and the intense belief it had in its righteous crusade. For instance in 1879 the BLVA stated

the temperance party have begun a new crusade and Lawson and his followers have their say in some towns in Ireland, slandering and vilifying those who engage in the trade or anyone who should dare to say a word on their behalf.<sup>149</sup>

There was a consensus among the upper echelons of society in nineteenth century Belfast that the area was overstocked with public houses and thus there was no need for a new establishment.<sup>150</sup> Consequently the application for the Gin Palace was refused in 1864. The League stated that

the magistrates deserve great credit for their righteous decision, which has given immense satisfaction throughout the country. It will mightily assist the Committee of the Irish Temperance League and Permissive Bill Association in their crusade against the pernicious and disgraceful traffic in intoxicants, which must ere long be totally suppressed by the votes of an intelligent and Christian people.<sup>151</sup>

As is shown in this quote the ITL believed at this juncture that the Belfast magistrates would support its work. However this demonstrates the League's tendency to inflate the reality of a situation. During the next eighteen months applications continued to be brought before the magistrates for the Gin Palace. The ITL continued to present signed memorials and public opposition, and the license was continually refused on the legal grounds of 'not being required for public accommodation.'<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> *BNL*, 9 January 1879.

<sup>150</sup> *BNL*, 6 July 1863.

<sup>151</sup> *ITLJ*, August 1869, p.126.

<sup>152</sup> *ITLJ*, December 1864, p.189.

Yet following a change in magistrates in July 1864 the application was granted by a majority of two; five votes for and three against. Without further information it is hard to determine whether the new magistrates opposed the temperance movement or were simply indifferent to the arguments put forth by the League, or made decisions for other reasons. Following this the ITL received negative coverage in the press and there was a documented public feeling that the League's negligence led to the licence being granted.<sup>153</sup> The League adopted a defensive position which was a traditional method employed by temperance organisations when facing adversity.<sup>154</sup> ITL argued that the absence of supportive magistrates was the

real cause of this monster drunkard-making establishment being opened in the centre of our town and not any neglect or indifference on the part of the leaders of the temperance movement.<sup>155</sup>

The Gin Palace campaign highlights how vulnerable the League was to the vagaries of magistrates and their individual positions on the drink trade and temperance. Through this experience the League learned not to take any support for granted. This may explain its obsessive character and the driven need to formalise its vision through the enactment of temperance legislation. This became a major cause of opposition towards the ITL. For instance in 1887 Mr. John Duddy, member of the BLVA stated

A good deal of the annoyance was due to the unceasing activity of those opposed to the trade. The temperance reformers – he should call them modern fanatics, misguided philanthropists – had placed themselves in the most ridiculous and unenviable position as champions of the cause. He objected to the statement that their object was to promote temperance, for whatever it might be they were destroying its virtues.<sup>156</sup>

The number of magistrates within the core leadership of the ITL demonstrates that there were some who held the League's vision. However, similar to the League's relationship with the clergy, association with the ITL seems to have been a personal decision and not a reflection of one's profession. Some magistrates supported Sunday

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<sup>153</sup> *Banner of Ulster*, 29 November 1864.

<sup>154</sup> Logan, p.527.

<sup>155</sup> *ITLJ*, December 1864, p.189.

<sup>156</sup> *BNL*, 27 September 1887.

Closing but this was probably due to sabbatarian ideologies. For instance at a meeting in Belfast in 1864 the magistrates recorded that 'it is right to observe that we have no quarrel with the publican in plying his vocation during six days of the week.'<sup>157</sup> Aside from those who were part of the League, magistrates generally held that while it was important to mitigate social evils, it was equally necessary to ensure that they worked within the bounds of 'justice and the spirit of British Law.'<sup>158</sup> Thus when faced with the League's opposition, magistrates argued that each license had to be decided on its merits as was laid out in the law.<sup>159</sup> As a result magistrates were more inclined to support regulationists instead of prohibitionists.

Others however were openly opposed to the League because of its so-called repressive approach to temperance embodied in its teetotal and prohibitionist ideologies. In England Harrison states that very few magistrates supported teetotalism.<sup>160</sup> The opinions of Mr. J.H. Otway, the Recorder of Belfast, in 1867 demonstrates the antagonistic relationship between the League and some magistrates. Mr. Otway believed that teetotalism was a 'vulgar and foreign phase'. He stated that

I think it is a joke, which a moral coward submits to rather than use the fortitude, which can distinguish between what is lawful and the excess of it, between the use and abuse of what is given to us to enjoy.<sup>161</sup>

Otway also opposed the ITL's fight for Sunday closing in Belfast. He disagreed that public houses should be closed for the entire day and proposed that they should be opened for one hour on a Sunday so that men could avail themselves of alcohol if they wished to and take it back to their homes.<sup>162</sup> It should be noted here that Otway was in fact endorsing regulationist ideologies by suggesting a reduction in opening hours. He clearly agreed that Sunday drinking was a problem but he was uncomfortable with one set of views being

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<sup>157</sup> *BNL*, 4 July 1864.

<sup>158</sup> *BNL*, 6 July 1863.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>160</sup> Harrison, p.359.

<sup>161</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1867, p.76.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid*.

forced on society as a whole. Otway's opinions are interesting as they give an indication of middle-class opinion of the League that was removed from the temperance versus trade conflict. Clearly it was not only the professional liquor trade who viewed the League as an obsessive organisation.

From the 1870s opposition to licences was not limited to the ITL. The BLVA also objected to the granting of new licences. In 1872 the *Belfast News-Letter* reported on the first opposition to licences from the BLVA. The report stated that arguments from BLVA member Mr. Dinnen stipulated that

The number of public houses is too great in Belfast, judging from other places and the action of the legislature and he thought that the Bench should take every means in their power of preventing new licences, unless in places where the commercial wants of the town require it.<sup>163</sup>

The Licensed Vintners Association suggested that it wanted to ensure tighter regulations in regards to the current licensing legislation in Ireland. However it was an attempt to protect their trade and interests, by opposing new licences and monopolising the trade in Belfast. Comparatively the ITL opposed the granting of additional licences as part of an attempt to destroy the drink trade and ensure conformity to a total abstinence lifestyle. However despite different goals, regulationists and prohibitionists often found themselves fighting the same battle. For instance, at the Belfast Quarter Sessions in 1876 representatives from both the ITL and the BLVA were present and opposed licences. Had these organisations put their differences aside and concentrated on the common goal, which was minimising the social destruction caused by excess drinking establishments, they would have been more successful at instigating the legislative reform that would potentially have been beneficial to society.

Opposition to licences was an attempt to maintain resistance against current practices which the League argued were destructive to society. In addition the newspaper reports which this generated secured publicity for the League which enhanced its identity as a

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<sup>163</sup> *BNL*, 29 October 1872.

pressure group. However while this provided the ITL with status and power it was restricted to local areas. If social drinking customs were to change throughout Britain and Ireland, legislative reform had to be enacted from the top down.

## Reform

As temperance legislation was contingent upon the level of support it received in the House of Commons, any attempts at reform had to begin with the individuals in Parliament. From its formation the UKA set its sights on Westminster and became active in politics from the 1857 general election onwards.<sup>164</sup> In Ireland the League advanced the party line and expressed its desire 'that friends of temperance [would] zealously aid the return to Parliament of members holding a view in favour of the prohibition of the liquor traffic.'<sup>165</sup>

In 1864 the executive committee of the League issued a circular to every MP in Ireland following the successful first reading of the Permissive Bill. This stated that

It is admitted on all hands that the common sale and use of strong drinks are a source of great evils to the community; and at the present time, when the distress prevalent in many parts of Ireland is a matter for general anxiety, we think it particularly desirable that the legislature should give its sanction to any wise measure which may tend to alleviate this distress. We are aware that an argument against the Bill is based by some on an idea that it would deprive the working classes of a source of comfort; but where the sons of toil have been appealed to, and their opinions tested on this question, they have pronounced overwhelmingly in favour of the measure. They know something of the danger which underlies this mis-called "comfort," and earnestly desire that temptation may be placed out of their reach. Resolutions to this effect have been unanimously adopted at about one hundred public meetings held in Ireland during the past year.<sup>166</sup>

This letter signified the start of the League's pressure politics and electoral agitation. The contents of the letter reflected many of the League's ideologies stressing the social ills caused by drink trade, the importance of legal suppression and a moral duty to remove temptation in Ireland. The letter was signed by; Mr. John Lyttle the Mayor of Belfast, Rev James Morgan, Father John Spratt, a Catholic priest, philanthropist and temperance

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<sup>164</sup> Harrison, p.245.

<sup>165</sup> *BNL*, 7 April 1863.

<sup>166</sup> *ITLJ*, July 1864, p.109.

reformer who worked closely with Father Mathew, and Mr. Marriott Dalway who was Justice of the Peace at the time.<sup>167</sup> These individuals represented Protestants, Catholics, the law and the local government. The character of these signatories is compared to the strongly religious deputation that was sent to the Quarter Sessions in order to oppose the license for the Gin Palace 1863. The inclusive nature represented by the individuals who signed the circular, was used to promote a unified front in terms of support for temperance legislation in Ireland. It also demonstrated that the ITL did work with its Catholic peers when it was necessary.

The League was not active in a general election until 1865. In June an address was presented to the ‘electors and non-electors of Ireland’ indicating that ‘the liquor traffic will be made a test question by many influential parties in the coming struggle, for the UKA had numerous branches all over Great Britain and Ireland.’<sup>168</sup> The League corresponded with and sent deputations to parliamentary candidates throughout Ireland in an attempt to gain pledges of support.<sup>169</sup> However the League’s first attempt at pressure politics in 1865 produced minimal results. It was only successful in ‘securing the active support of one candidate and in obtaining from the other a promise not to oppose the Permissive Bill.’<sup>170</sup> The single candidate that supported the Permissive Bill, and whom was endorsed by the League for the 1865 elections, was Samuel Gibson Getty Esq, Conservative MP for Belfast. Getty made it clear to the deputation that he would not support everything that was in the Bill. The League only endorsed Getty, as they had no one else.<sup>171</sup> Comparatively in Dublin the League had been unsuccessful in securing support from any candidate. The correspondence between James Haughton and Mr. Benjamin Guinness, Conservative MP for Dublin, indicates the limited influence of the League in the mid-1860s. Haughton sent a detailed letter to Guinness stating his opinion that as Guinness was involved in the brewing

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<sup>167</sup> *ITLJ*, July 1864, p.109.

<sup>168</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1865, p.119.

<sup>169</sup> *ITLJ*, August 1865, p.516.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid*, p.516.

<sup>171</sup> Malcolm, p.267; *ITLJ*, August 1865, p.516.



industry, he was unfit to be a member of parliament. From Haughton's perspective 'the occupation of brewer is wholly incompatible with that of a statesman.'<sup>172</sup> It was Guinness' reply, which provides perspective on Haughton's, and therefore the ITL's, influence in Dublin. Guinness stated

Sir- I have a long letter signed by you, and having read the first page, put the letter and its enclosure aside, and did not read another line. Such had been my habit for many years with anything written by you, or reported as spoken by you. I return herewith the letter alluded to, and as I have no respect for-, and take no interest whatever in, your vagaries, I beg to decline any further communication from you.<sup>173</sup>

Evidently in 1865 the ITL did not yet have political influence and thus brewers such as Guinness did not feel the strain of its pressure politics. However the League's work during the 1865 election was preparation for the more vigorous agitation it later conducted.<sup>174</sup>

Logan indicates that in Scotland 'early prohibitionist candidates were publicity stunts.'<sup>175</sup> While the ITL did not run its own temperance candidates at any point over the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries the ideas behind the early work of both these organisations was essentially the same as it was a way to test its methods and their efficiency.

The League's pressure politics were centred on the test questions, which it submitted to candidates in order to gauge their support for or against temperance legislation. This was the method which enabled the League to utilize voters as a weapon against candidates.<sup>176</sup> Test questions were delivered to candidates through deputation or written correspondence and were centred primarily on Sunday Closing and the Permissive Bill. Advertisements were placed in *The Journal* and the local press asking friends of temperance to withhold their vote until they were instructed as to which candidate was supportive of the bill.<sup>177</sup> If, like Guinness, a candidate did not answer or rejected a deputation this was taken as opposition to the League's objectives and the MP was denounced in *The Journal*.

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<sup>172</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1865, p.120.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid*, p.121

<sup>174</sup> *ITLJ*, August 1865, p.516

<sup>175</sup> Logan, p.291.

<sup>176</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1865, p.427; *ITLJ*, August 1865, p.516; *BNL*, 10 July 1865.

<sup>177</sup> *BNL* 1865; *ITLJ*, August 1865, p.516.

The League's methods were advanced again in 1872 following a meeting with the International Order of Good Templars where it was resolved that the organisations would 'join together to entice action at municipal, parochial and parliamentary elections.'<sup>178</sup> In the same year the BLVA also began pressure politics in order to counter the agitation of the League. The work of the BLVA mirrored the work of the ITL. Therefore where the League's test questions were based on support for restrictive legislation, the BLVA's was based on opposition to legislation. At its annual meeting in 1874 the BLVA state that

The temperance League and supporters of the Permissive Bill are as indefatigable and persistent in their furtherance of this impractical measure as ever; and so far had their fanaticism led them that at the late elections, the Permissive Bill became the testing question to nearly all the candidates seeking parliamentary honours. This policy was first adapted by them and as a natural consequence the various Licensed Vintners Associations...in self-defence, determined upon similar action.<sup>179</sup>

Throughout the 1870s Irish MPs were generally in favour of Sunday Closing legislation. Within this, Ulster MPs were more likely to vote for legislation than any other Irish MP. For instance in 1874 no Ulster MP voted against the Sunday Closing Bill, which was introduced by Richard Smyth, Liberal MP for Derry.<sup>180</sup> Therefore due to the support from Ulster the Irish temperance movement was more successful at gaining MP's support than was the trade.<sup>181</sup> However absent MPs were a constant problem for temperance lobbyists.<sup>182</sup> Therefore as the majority of MPs did not vote on temperance legislation the ITL adapted its strategy in 1874 and attempted to block opponents of the Permissive Bill from getting elected. Thus when a candidate's answers were unsatisfactory the ITL attempted to decrease their votes by launching a propaganda campaign against them.<sup>183</sup> For instance in April 1880, an advertisement was placed in the *Belfast News-Letter* telling the electorate in Monaghan not to vote for Mr. Sewallis Shirley, Conservative MP, as he had

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<sup>178</sup> Minute Book, 5 July 1872.

<sup>179</sup> *BNL*, 9 October 1874.

<sup>180</sup> Malcolm, pp.228-229.

<sup>181</sup> Malcolm, p.230

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid*, p.217.

<sup>183</sup> Harrison, p.245.

not promised to support Local Option.<sup>184</sup> Placards and posters denouncing the opposing MP were also a common method employed by the ITL in this work. When no supportive candidate was found, voters were encouraged to vote for the candidate who was indifferent to the Bill.<sup>185</sup> Clearly this was an attempt to minimise votes against the bill if the League was unable to increase votes in its favour.

During the general election of 1885 the League attacked Conservative MP Mr. William Macartney. Macartney was a temperance supporter, however he had made it clear that he did not support all of the provisions laid out in temperance legislation nor the League's campaign for prohibition.<sup>186</sup> By showing partial support for temperance legislation, Macartney was taking same stance that Getty had in the 1860s and whom the League continued to endorse. Evidently however by the 1880s the League's political influence had changed and the organisation did not have to settle for an MP who was not wholly supportive of its aims. This was no doubt enhanced by the significant connections that the League maintained through its moral suasion branch and the successful business, which it had developed by the 1880s.

Due to what the League perceived as Macartney's unsupportive stance, it adopted a proactive approach and attempted to slander his name and split his vote.<sup>187</sup> A letter published in the *Belfast News-Letter* demonstrates the intensity with which the ITL conducted its campaign against Macartney. The author stated that

The remotest villages of South Antrim are to-day placarded literally with hundreds of bills in the name of the Temperance League, in opposition to Mr. Macartney, I counted thirty-five flaming bills of three different descriptions on one wall in a country district, some of them three feet long. So far as placarding is concerned, the Irish Temperance League seems to be expending more money that the two South Antrim candidates twice over.<sup>188</sup>

The League had attacked many candidates during the elections in the late nineteenth

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<sup>184</sup> *BNL*, 7 April 1880.

<sup>185</sup> *ITLJ*, January 1874, p.11; Malcolm, p.226.

<sup>186</sup> *BNL*, 5 May 1885.

<sup>187</sup> *BNL*, 2 December 1885; Minute Book, 3 December 1885.

<sup>188</sup> *BNL*, 5 December 1885.

century, however the extent of the League's opposition to Macartney was considered unjustified. As the candidate did not absolutely agree with the ITL's legislative ideologies, it categorically ignored that fact that Macartney did support some of its measure and was generally open to temperance legislation. Herein lays the League's fundamental issue. Ironically for an organisation founded upon the principle of unity, the League's inability to focus on common ground with others destroyed its hopes of a successful legislative campaign.

It was common for those who were opposed to total abstinence to view the League as an organisation damagingly obsessed with its objectives. The BLVA in particular described the actions of the League as 'tyranny under the guise of philanthropy.'<sup>189</sup> Yet following the League's attack on Macartney, many of its own supporters became uncomfortable with the rigid lines laid down by the League which one member described as a 'policy of coercion and intimidation'.<sup>190</sup> Another suggested that

the zeal of certain members of the Irish Temperance League is about to eat them up, as indicated by the ruffled feeling of not a few of the friends and supporters of temperance, who, with myself, feel that the part played by them in the recent elections and those yet to come, has been ill-timed and imprudent, and likely to hinder rather than advance the cause we have so much at heart.<sup>191</sup>

Another member suggested that the League required 'tempering with common sense as to the temperaments of other people who take as great an interest in temperance legislation as they.'<sup>192</sup> Individuals such as Rev Hugh Hanna, who had been connected to the League from its foundations, turned against the organisation due to its treatment of Macartney.<sup>193</sup> By the 1880s the ITL's methods were self-destructive. Yet the League ignored these warnings in regard to its action and seemed unconcerned that its own supporters began to voice the same issues that its opposition had in regards to its relentless zeal. In 1892 complaints were made in regard to the volume of letters and resolutions that the League

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<sup>189</sup> *BNL*, 5 December 1885.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>193</sup> *BNL*, 2 December 1885.

sent to Mr. Harland, Conservative MP for Belfast, from local Bands of Hope and Sunday Schools. However the reaction, the level of debate and the correspondence, which its methods generated, indicate that the League had a significant level of political power by the 1880s. However much of this support was coming from the League's relationship with the UKA and its relationship with the Liberal Party. As will be shown in the following section due to the developing political situation in Ireland this link with the Liberal party placed the ITL a unique middle ground both within Irish politics and British temperance.

### ***Legislative Temperance and Irish Politics***

Throughout Britain the political allegiance of those involved on both sides of the drink question was relatively straightforward. The general trend was Conservative and trade, versus Liberals and temperance. This was enhanced in 1869 when the Liberal government committed itself to licensing reform.<sup>194</sup> The connection between Liberals and temperance was strengthened once more in the 1890s when the UKA officially became linked with the Liberal party.<sup>195</sup> The drink question in Ireland however was more complicated. Unlike their English peers, Ulster conservatives were more likely to be supportive of temperance legislation.<sup>196</sup> For instance in 1869 twelve Ulster M.P's voted for the Permissive Bill and only one voted against.<sup>197</sup> In 1874 the majority of Ulster voters for the Permissive Bill were Conservative therefore voting for the Bill put them at odds with their own party.<sup>198</sup>

As a predominantly Protestant Ulster organisation, the ITL had strong links to Unionism. From the founding of the organisation the League's language and rhetoric projected a strong unionist symbolism. References and resolutions were made to Queen and Country. The statement 'union is strength', while it promoted the ITL's idea of unity

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<sup>194</sup> Shiman, p.43.

<sup>195</sup> Harrison, p.243; Fahey, 'Temperance and the Liberal Party – Lord Peel's Report, 1899', *Journal of British Studies*, 10 (1971), pp.132–159.

<sup>196</sup> Malcolm, p.203.

<sup>197</sup> *ITLJ*, July 1869, p.45.

<sup>198</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1874, pp.88-91.

between temperance reformers was also loaded with political connotations of maintaining the union between Ireland and England.<sup>199</sup> The League also had significant links to the Orange Order through members such as William Johnston and its annual work during the 12 July parades discussed in Chapter Three. In addition both Rev Hugh Hanna, and Johnston, were associated with controversies which had been widely attributed with fuelling sectarian tensions in Belfast in the nineteenth century.<sup>200</sup> In 1912 30% of the core-leadership of the ITL signed the Ulster Covenant, a document which asserted cultural dominance for Unionists throughout Ulster.<sup>201</sup> While this was not overwhelming support for the covenant, the accumulation of these elements clearly indicates that the ITL had a Unionist and Protestant character. In terms of political ideologies members of the League were closely linked to the Conservative Party. Therefore the UKA's connection to the Liberal party, which was supportive of Irish Nationalist's fight for Home Rule, placed the League and the temperance movement in Ulster in a difficult position.

Similar problems were to be found within the trade movement in Ulster. The Conservative party supported the trade movement thus placing the Irish vintners, who were more likely to be Liberals, in a difficult position.<sup>202</sup> The BLVA also had a significant Catholic and Nationalist membership.<sup>203</sup> Therefore in Ulster a predominantly Protestant/Unionist temperance movement was dependent on the Liberal, while the Catholic/Nationalist trade was dependent on Conservatives. As Malcolm argues the temperance debates in parliament 'produced curious political alignments' in Ireland.<sup>204</sup>

Due to the religious and political character of the temperance and trade in Belfast it is clear to see how easily this issue could have been consumed by sectarian rivalry,

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<sup>199</sup> *ITLJ*, August 1865, p.117.

<sup>200</sup> Gibbon, p.92.

<sup>201</sup> "Ulster Covenant", accessed 25 January 2016, <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/search-ulster-covenant>, 'Census of Ireland, 1911', accessed 14 January 2016 <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/services/search-ulster-covenant> ; *ITLRB*, 1912, pp.2-4.

<sup>202</sup> Malcolm, p.220.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid*, p.220; Gibbon, p.92.

<sup>204</sup> Malcolm, p.223.

particularly as tensions spilled into riots in late nineteenth century Belfast.<sup>205</sup> If the temperance movement was to have any political success it had no choice but to focus on personal preference and maintain a distance between the drink question and political and religious tensions. Both the temperance and trade found themselves in a unique middle ground; neither could afford to alienate their unionist or nationalist peers in Ireland, or the larger British parties, which their movements were aligned to. Thus from its formation the League stated that it was ‘prepared to work with any man irrespective of his religious or political opinion.’<sup>206</sup> Several members of the League’s early leadership demonstrated this commitment. James Haughton, one of the most influential members of the League in the mid-nineteenth century, was from a Protestant denomination and was a nationalist.<sup>207</sup> Mr. J Jordan MP and member of the ITL, was also a nationalist. There was a number of times when the League and Mr. John Redmond, a Catholic and Nationalist MP, worked together in order to advance the temperance movement. These were rare figures within the League and their success may not have been possible had they had a more militant nationalism or republican ideologies. In its early years the UKA had maintained a policy of political neutrality, as it could not afford to ‘alienate potential support by identifying itself too closely with any one political party.’<sup>208</sup> Subsequently the League followed the precedent set by the UKA and adopted this policy. Thus when the League began electoral agitation it endorsed candidates based solely on their support for or against temperance legislation and made this policy clear in 1865. When a supportive candidate was found for the Permissive Bill the League stated that it would ‘sink all other considerations, and vote for the candidate or candidates who would support this measure.’<sup>209</sup> The trade in Belfast also found it necessary to adopt a similar policy and the Board of Management of the BLVA

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<sup>205</sup> Catherine Hirst, *Religion, Politics and Violence in Nineteenth Century Belfast: The Pound and Sandy Row* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2002).

<sup>206</sup> *BNL*, 7 April 1863.

<sup>207</sup> Malcolm, p.195.

<sup>208</sup> Harrison, p.242.

<sup>209</sup> *ITLJ*, August 1865, p.516.

strictly excluded any mention of religion or politics from its meetings and looked to the representation of the borough in a trade respect alone.<sup>210</sup>

Due to this policy the League sometimes supported a Conservative candidate, and at other times it supported a Liberal one. Clearly this was splitting the vote of the main parties. This was problematic as it decreased votes for the Liberal party, which was favourable to temperance legislation. Thus some of the League's British peers criticised its no-politics policy. In *The Journal* in 1874 League member A.J. Crawford highlighted these tensions stating that some members thought the League's 'principles are right when they help to gain a seat for a Liberal candidate, but wrong when they throw our votes into the Conservative scale.'<sup>211</sup> Crawford stated that those who disapproved of this the policy cared more for the 'party cry of political factions than about the drink problem.'<sup>212</sup> At the same time some of the League's Irish peers also criticised its methodologies. For instance in the 1880s a letter was published in the *Belfast News-Letter* asking the League for an explanation as to why it had sent a deputation to Michael Davitt and the Land League.<sup>213</sup> The author of the letter was mistaken and the deputation sent to Davitt was from the Dublin based IPBA. Nonetheless the level of disgust at the thought of the ITL working with a Nationalist such as Davitt, and the issues voiced from the British temperance movement when the League worked with Conservatives, demonstrates the difficult path which the ITL had to tread. As a resolute supporter of the League stated in defence of its actions

the League was formed for the sole purpose of removing intemperance thus the committee is obliged, always reluctantly and with regret to use its influence sometimes against one political party, sometimes against another.<sup>214</sup>

The emergence of the Home Rule movement in the late nineteenth century shifted the focus of arguments for the drink question. For instance the drink trade was a vital industry

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<sup>210</sup> *BNL*, 28 Jan 1874.

<sup>211</sup> *ITLJ*, July 1874, p.32.

<sup>212</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1874, p.34.

<sup>213</sup> *BNL*, 5 May 1885.

<sup>214</sup> *BNL*, 2 December 1885.



in Ireland therefore the argument took on an increasingly nationalist tone. Therefore, as Malcolm argues, the Home Rule movement 'saved the Irish vintners and allowed them to reconcile political principles with material interest.'<sup>215</sup> Following this the drink trade and local publicans became vital to the Home Rule movement causing Nationalist votes for temperance legislation to decrease. By the 1890s Home Rulers were blocking temperance legislation.<sup>216</sup> However some Nationalists, such as John Redmond, continued to support temperance legislation.

At the same time there was a compatibility between temperance and nationalism. This was no doubt due to the temperance movement's arguments that stipulated that sobriety could produce a strong and respectable nation. Therefore larger national concerns were a pawn to be used within the temperance fight. As stated previously the League linked Fenian activity to the continuation of Sunday trading in the 1860s. The fight for Irish Sunday Closing and the Permissive Bill also had 'nationalist' undertones. For instance in 1869 Haughton advised abstainers to press even more earnestly on Parliament

the necessity of passing that measure without delay, so as to place in the hands of the people, the whole people, the power of saving themselves from the malign influences of that traffic in intoxicating liquors which is ever barring their way towards happiness an earth and in heaven.<sup>217</sup>

While arguments were only in terms of the drink question, suggesting that the power should be placed in the hands of local people, certainly had connotations of nationalist self-governing aspirations. In addition the fight for an Irish Sunday Closing Bill, which had both public and parliamentary support in Ireland but continued to be opposed by English MPs effectively legitimised many Home Rule arguments that stated that the union was detrimental to the Irish nation which should be allowed its own government. Sir Dominic Corrigan, Liberal MP for Dublin, who introduced the Sale of Liquors on a Sunday (Ireland) Bill, believed the English had a tendency to incense rather than quell Irish

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<sup>215</sup> Elizabeth Malcolm, 'Temperance and Irish Nationalism' in F.S.L Lyons and R.A.J Hawkins, eds. *Ireland Under the Union: Varieties of Tension* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp.69-114.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1869, p.85.

matters.<sup>218</sup> Corrigan was opposed to Home Rule, but he attempted to demonstrate how the actions of the English MP's, in regards to the Sunday Closing, was playing into the hands of Home Rule arguments and therefore linked to wider constitutional issues.<sup>219</sup> Corrigan stated to the House of Commons in July 1873

If drunkenness-and particularly Sunday drunkenness, with its train of vice, fighting, and murder-has become a national disgrace in Ireland, who inflicted it on us? Not an Irish, but an English Parliament.<sup>220</sup>

While the drink trade was increasingly linked to the nationalist movement, the emergence of Home Rule enhanced the difficult position within which the ITL operated due to its national arguments and the benefits it suggested that total abstinence could bring about for the advancement of the Irish nation. However the League's strong Protestant character meant that it was 'protected' by a perceived religious identity. In Ireland a religious character evoked connotations of a political and cultural ideology meaning that the League's pan-Protestant character sheltered it from being accused of promoting nationalist sympathies. Hempton and Hill argue that for societies aimed at moral and social improvement, which operated a no politics policy 'their very ethos contributed much to an Ulster Protestant identity.'<sup>221</sup> Nonetheless during the Home Rule movement the League found it difficult to stay above political tensions in Ireland. For instance in May 1891 the League stated

are well nigh sick of the 'Irish question'...it is one of the most disgraceful scandals of the time (and that is saying much!) that the people have been compelled to groan and sweat under greedy taskmasters, to starve while 'making many rich', to pine and die in helpless sight of luxury, to drink and be damned for national revenue, and to have to wait for relief from all their cruel wrongs until it suit the convenience and pleasure of a man like C.S Parnell! It is a dishonour to the country of Cromwell that eighty-six men, or three time that number, should be able to reduce its legislature to ignominious impotence.'<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Eoin O'Brian, 'Sir Dominic Corrigan', *Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review*, 73 (1984), pp.146-158.

<sup>219</sup> Malcolm, p.223.

<sup>220</sup> "Commons Sitting Wed 3 July 1873", accessed 10 May 2016  
<http://parlipapers.proquest.com.queens.ezpl.qub.ac.uk/parlipapers>.

<sup>221</sup> Hempton and Hill, p.184.

<sup>222</sup> Malcolm, p.274; *ITLJ*, May 1891, p.64.

Despite the ITL's attempts to make the political issues in Ireland subordinate to temperance, the reality was that outside of the League temperance was subordinate to Home Rule. For instance in 1886 the ITL stated that

the issue before the country was Home Rule or no Home Rule, and upon this issue the contest was nearly everywhere carried on. In many constituencies something like civil war went on, and the temperance organisation hardly found it possible to take any very prominent part in the proceedings.<sup>223</sup>

For some in the face of a national struggle, temperance was not a significant issue. Even members of the ITL found it difficult to place temperance on a central platform in their working lives. MPs including Dalway and Johnston, who were part of the core-leadership of the ITL, did not mention temperance in their electoral campaigns in the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>224</sup> In fact a *Belfast News-Letter* report in 1872 stated that Johnston replied to a deputation of the BLVA indicating that he would not support the Permissive Bill unconditionally.<sup>225</sup> In 1880 J.P. Corry, Conservative MP for Mid Armagh and former president of the ITL, also stated that he would not unconditionally support the Bill.<sup>226</sup> The extent of Johnston's parliamentary agitation for the Permissive Bill and Local Option in the 1880s suggests that he misled the deputation from the BLVA. Johnston's answers nevertheless indicate that outside of the League, it was difficult to maintain a relentless dedication to contentious legislation. Subsequently the League's dissatisfaction with the subordination of the temperance question led it to consider putting up its own candidate who would focus solely on temperance.<sup>227</sup> This remained an idealistic desire and one which it did not pursue. As temperance could not compete with political issues, the likelihood of a prohibitionist politician being elected was doubtful.

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<sup>223</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1896, p.78.

<sup>224</sup> *BNL*, 12 March 1885; *BNL*, 27 February 1890.

<sup>225</sup> *BNL*, 31 October 1872.

<sup>226</sup> Malcolm, p.253.

<sup>227</sup> Minute Book, 28 June 1872; Malcolm, p.226.

Despite its issues, towards the end of the nineteenth century temperance was included in the election campaigns for many candidates.<sup>228</sup> This was a reflection of the growing importance of the total abstinence question both within religious and medical spheres. As has been shown there was a significant level of support for temperance legislation in Ulster, which provided the movement and the League with a degree of power. However as this was not replicated to the same degree outside Belfast it is likely that the League's political power was down to its personal connections and its position as a reputable business in the city. The BLVA had hinted at the apparent power of the League as early as 1873. For instance one member argued that the ITL looked formidable on paper but in reality this was not the case. The reason the League could do so much mischief, the BLVA argued, was that 'they had succeeded in getting gentlemen – MPs and statesmen- to make certain pledges, which afterwards they found extremely difficult to get rid of.'<sup>229</sup>

While the League functioned as an umbrella group for temperance societies in Ireland, they were unable to replicate this work in the political sphere. The formation of the IPBA in Dublin 1869, bearing in mind that the ITL had a Dublin committee in the 1860s, suggests that that the staunchness of the League restricted its ability to emulate its political work outside of Ulster. Mr T.W. Russell, former agent of the ITL, was secretary of the IPBA.<sup>230</sup> In the mid nineteenth century Russell personified the link between the northern and southern prohibition, and Sunday closing movements. However over the late nineteenth century he increasingly embodied the differences.

In the late 1860s when support for Sunday closing had gained momentum the League joined with its southern colleagues and sent deputations to London.<sup>231</sup> However it was at this point that the innate differences, which the ITL had initially worked to counteract, began to fragment the Sunday Closing movement. Southern temperance reformers and

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<sup>228</sup> *BNL*, 3 March 1892, *BNL*, 21 January 1896; Alvin Jackson, 'Ulster Politics and Protestant Society in Edwardian Ireland' *Historical Journal*, 33 (1990), p.847.

<sup>229</sup> *BNL*, 5 July 1873.

<sup>230</sup> *Freemans Journal*, 26 May 1869.

<sup>231</sup> Malcolm, p.196; *ITLJ*, March 1869, p.65.

their English peers were prepared to settle for shortened Sunday trading hours. Major Myles O'Reilly, Liberal MP for Longford, supported a Sunday closing Bill in this form and agreed to take it to Parliament.<sup>232</sup> The League however was disappointed at this partial Bill and from that point on gave it minimal support.<sup>233</sup> After the Sunday Closing Bill was passed in 1878 for the remainder of the period the ITL agitated for the Sunday Closing Act to be made permanent and extended to the five exempt cities.<sup>234</sup> Russell offered counsel to the League and advised them 'not to put difficulty in the way of the loyal and earnest members who were promoting the Sunday closing movement.'<sup>235</sup> Again in 1892 Russell wrote a letter to the League, which was published in the *Belfast News-Letter*, denouncing an upcoming Sunday Closing deputation to Conservative MP Mr. Arthur Balfour, Russell stated

the time has gone by for that form of procedure...the day for deputations has gone by. The battle ought now to be fought out on the floor of the House of Commons and in my opinion the temperance party would be better employed in preparing for parliamentary action – say, by means of an amendment.<sup>236</sup>

Temperance reformers in the south of Ireland were more willing to compromise and work towards realistic goals. Comparatively the ITL, believing that they had compromised enough by fighting for pieces of partial legislation, remained resolute to a fault.

Consequently by the end of the century the political temperance movement was conducted by the ITL in Belfast, and the Irish Association for the Prevention of Intemperance (IAPI) in Dublin.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> O'Reilly's Bill wanted to limit Sunday trading hours to between 1pm and 2:20pm and between 8pm and 9pm. Furthermore, he aimed to do away with public house drinking and encourage home drinking and drinking within restaurants. This however only added to the opposition's belief that Sunday Closing was simply the middle class imposing their values on to the working classes. Malcolm, pp.197-199.

<sup>233</sup> Malcolm, p.197.

<sup>234</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906-1912, included tables showing Sunday arrests in the five exempt cities compared with the rest of Ireland.

<sup>235</sup> *BNL*, 8 January 1892.

<sup>236</sup> In 1892 Russell was a Liberal Unionist MP for South Tyrone, *BNL*, 8 January 1892.

<sup>237</sup> By this stage the ISCA and the IPBA had amalgamated in to the Irish Association for the Prevention of Intemperance, Malcolm, p.251.

The differences between the northern and southern temperance reformers weakened the political ambitions of the Irish temperance movement. Duncan argues that in England ‘the temperance movement floundered due to dogmatic internal squabbling concerning the implementation of practical measures.’<sup>238</sup> In addition the political and religious tensions in Ireland constantly threatened to polarise the temperance question on a nationalist and unionist basis. If the Irish prohibitionist movement was to have any chance of legislation it had to put its political and religious differences aside and promote a united front. Therefore as well as William Johnston, the 1888 Local (Veto) Ireland Bill was submitted by ITL member and Nationalist MP Mr. Jeremiah Jordan, Liberal MP and secretary of the Irish Society for the Prevention of Intemperance Mr. T.W. Russell, Conservative MP Mr. De Cobain, and Nationalist MP Mr. John Redmond.<sup>239</sup> These individuals included members from the Nationalist, Unionist, Protestant and Catholic communities in Ireland. Indisputably this was used to portray a sense of widespread unity on the temperance question in Ireland. The consolidation of these individuals and the temperance organisations resulted in the foundations of The Irish National Temperance Executive (INTE).<sup>240</sup>

The INTE claimed to ‘represent persons of all shades of political and religious opinion...from all parts of Ireland.’<sup>241</sup> Its propaganda also attempted to highlight its representative nature. For instance in 1910 a manifesto to electors included quotes from the Catholic and Protestant churches in support of temperance legislation.<sup>242</sup> It endorsed votes for temperance legislation as a requirement for every true Irishman to protect and advance the country. Rhetorically the INTE was trying to promote a common foe that had the power to unite. Contextually this was against a political backdrop in Ireland that was threatening to tear the country apart. In reality however Protestants largely dominated the

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<sup>238</sup> Duncan, p.23.

<sup>239</sup> *Liquor Traffic, Local Veto (Ireland)*, 1888, (25), 3, III.715.

<sup>240</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.49.

<sup>241</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, pp.18-19.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid*, pp.36-37.

INTE and there is no evidence to suggest the Catholic Pioneers were included. However Dairmuid Ferriter indicates that the Pioneers were ‘not keen on immersing...in the toils of the IAPI’.<sup>243</sup> Therefore it is likely that their detachment from the INTE was of their own accord.<sup>244</sup>

Prohibitionist inability to compromise is generally considered to have destroyed its political ambitions. The ITL had the same characteristics as it never compromised on its desire for prohibition. Thus the League’s move into the INTE can be viewed as a tactical move to place some distance between its prohibitionist ideologies and the more realistic political aims of the whole Irish temperance movement. In this was an attempt to place total abstinence reform above all else, including the League’s ideologies, and uniting the fragmented legislation movement. Yet the League maintained a strong level of power in the united political organisation. Mr. William Wilkinson was secretary of both the ITL and the INTE. In addition the INTE’s Belfast office was noted as Lombard Street, which was the ITL office and coffee house.<sup>245</sup> By consolidating under the umbrella of the INTE, the ITL demonstrated an ability to compromise its forefront position in order to unite and strengthen the temperance movement and advance the legislative fight.

### ***Twentieth Century***

The temperance movement in Britain, in the opening decades of the twentieth century, continued to be endorsed by the Liberal party however failed to get any legislation passed.<sup>246</sup> Yet the fact that the Liberal Party continued to make promises to the temperance movement suggests that its support was important and that the British temperance movement did wield a level of political strength. The temperance campaign was led by the

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<sup>243</sup> Ferriter, p.121.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid.

<sup>245</sup> *ITLRB*, 1910, p.38.

<sup>246</sup> Duncan, p.79

UKA and historians suggest that the movement had never been stronger.<sup>247</sup> Williams and Brake argue that

there was no inclination to admit defeat...up until the outbreak of the First World War the temperance movement remained a real threat to the liquor trade and a force to be reckoned with in Parliament.<sup>248</sup>

Moreover Weir argues that 'pressure for temperance reform was stronger between 1900 and 1914 than it had been during the previous thirty years.'<sup>249</sup>

The biggest political fight that the temperance movement had in the early twentieth century began in 1908 when the King's speech mentioned the introduction of a new licensing Bill in the upcoming session of parliament.<sup>250</sup> Following this temperance and trade mobilised into two opposing sides in the hope of getting the Bill passed or rejected. The Bill itself covered a wide range of topics including Sunday closing and the sale of alcohol in clubs. However its main aim was largely to reduce the number of licences in Britain over a period of fourteen years. The Bill sought to place licensing power back into the hand of the justices at the Quarter Sessions and to provide compensation to those affected by the reduction. Additionally the population of an area would affect the number of licences. Yet it was the provisions to introduce Local Option that satisfied the temperance movement.<sup>251</sup> The Bill stated that following a period during which the number of licences would be reduced, local option would be passed. Furthermore if this accumulated into prohibition a new vote could be taken after three years.<sup>252</sup>

Organisations throughout Britain came to offer their support when the campaign was launched at a national convention at the Queen's Hall in London.<sup>253</sup> In England the movement had no problem with filling large halls, but what was striking was the large

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<sup>247</sup> Gwylmor Prys Williams and George Thompson Brake, *Drink in Great Britain, 1900–1979* (London: Edsall, 1980), p.35.

<sup>248</sup> Williams and Brake, *Drink in Great Britain, 1900–1979*, p.34.

<sup>249</sup> R.B Weir, 'Obsessed with Moderation: The Drink Trades and the Drink Question 1870-1930' *British Journal of Addiction*, 79 (1984), p.95.

<sup>250</sup> Duncan, p.34.

<sup>251</sup> Duncan, p.34.

<sup>252</sup> Ibid.

<sup>253</sup> Williams and Brake, p.34.



level of support in villages and towns.<sup>254</sup> Similarities can be seen in Ireland. The ITL threw all its resources into the support for the Bill.<sup>255</sup> In 1908 the League reportedly held 118 public meetings in Belfast and another 234 meetings throughout the rest of Ireland. Figures are not available for the number of meetings held in Belfast in 1907, but considering meetings in town and country alone, the ITL conducted just over one hundred extra meetings in 1908 in agitation for the licensing Bill. When discussing the reasons for supporting the Bill the ITL stated

temperance reformers of every shade felt that the Bill was worthy of support. It covered the points which had been advocated by the Church of England Temperance Society, and by the Bills which had been promoted by those sections of “Moderate” temperance reformers who could not go the full way with the United Kingdom Alliance; it largely followed the lines laid down in Lord Peel’s Report of the Royal Commission, and provided for the immediate application of Local option in regard to new licences, the same principles to apply to all licences at the end of the time limit as regards either prohibition or reduction.<sup>256</sup>

Sir Edward Carson, in a speech against the Bill in 1908, stated that support for the Bill was so strong in Ireland that ‘a large number of my own constituents are arrayed as forces behind the Bill, although it does not apply to Ireland.’<sup>257</sup> The Irish Unionist movement was opposed to the Bill. This was no doubt due to their links with the Conservatives who, as previously mentioned, were largely linked to the trade movement in Britain. Clearly Unionist and Conservative members of the ITL were again placed in an awkward position. However by this stage the League had long perfected its ability to remove temperance from the politics of religion and culture in Ireland. Thus at a number of League meetings it evoked ‘strong expressions of surprise and indignation at the line taken by the Irish Unionist Members in violation of their promises.’<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Williams and Brake, p.34.

<sup>255</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.18.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid*, p.17.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid*, p.18.

<sup>258</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.17.

Unexpectedly, both the ITL and the UKA were supporting a bill similar to one, which the temperance movement had been categorically opposed to at the start of the century.<sup>259</sup> The UK-wide prohibition movement had overcome its inability to compromise. Alternatively, the 1908 Bill had managed to succeed where others had failed. It appealed to all sections of the temperance movement. The quote above from the ITL shows that this Bill met the needs of religious, moderate and prohibitionist temperance reformers. For the first time all sections within the temperance movement had a common goal. It is unsurprising therefore that support for the 1908 campaign was so strong. The internal squabbling's in the temperance movement had destroyed its own efficiency; unity was the key to any success.

In November 1908 the Bill received a third reading.<sup>260</sup> A deputation of the ITL executive travelled to London to show support.<sup>261</sup> The Bill was voted through by a majority of 237 and was sent to the House of Lords.<sup>262</sup> Unfortunately for the ITL members of the House of Lords held a meeting of peers in order to test opinion on the Bill. This meeting at Lord Lansdowne's home was effectively a coup to destroy the Bill.<sup>263</sup> At the second reading of the Bill it was decided that it should not be allowed to precede any further. When it went to the vote it was rejected by a majority of 176.<sup>264</sup> This outraged the ITL, along with the rest of the temperance, movement. The League stated,

Never has there been a more humiliating sight witnessed in this country that that presented when this assembly of noble Lords met and agreed that when they assembled in the House of Peers to discuss the bill they would reject it as unworthy of their wasting time on its consideration – a Bill which after many weeks of consideration in the House of Commons had passed its Third Reading by a majority of 237.<sup>265</sup>

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<sup>259</sup> Williams and Brake, p.34

<sup>260</sup> Ibid.

<sup>261</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.19.

<sup>262</sup> Williams and Brake, p.36.

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Williams and Brake, p.36.; *ITLRB*, 1906, pp.18-20.

<sup>265</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, pp.18-20.

Therefore despite the strength of the Edwardian temperance movement, this defeat signified the end of the temperance movements 'political ambitions until the outbreak of the war in 1914.'<sup>266</sup>

## ***Conclusion***

The formation of the ITL in 1858 professionalised the legislative movement in Ireland and brought it into line with the wider British movement. As discussed in Chapter Three the League's moral suasion work was progressive, modernising and attempted to advance a teetotal culture in which everyone could participate. Comparatively the League's legislative work fundamentally desired to craft a political transformation in order to protect citizens from the detrimental effects of alcohol and usher in the sober culture developed through its moral suasion work.

There was an element of control in the League's ideologies; it did not deny that it wanted those who were opposed to its ideas to conform. However controlling society was not the main aim, instead viewing the issue as a means to an end. The League believed that state intervention in the drink question was necessary in order to protect its citizens from detrimental behaviours even if this did interfere with individual freedoms. In addition as this area of work was aimed at drunkards, moderationist and businessmen therefore attempting to enact change among all classes in society.

While the League's rhetoric was based upon a need to modernise society and protect citizens, it undeniably became obsessed with destroying the drink trade as opposed to establishing social reform. In addition its righteous belief in its cause enhanced the League's blind zeal and inability to compromise, which characterised its legislative strategy. Its connection to the UKA and its support from the Liberals over the late nineteenth century enhanced the League's zeal and damaged its ability to work with its peers and accept a partial win. This effectively polarized the northern and southern temperance reformers and further fragmented the Irish temperance movement. The

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<sup>266</sup> Dunn, p.67.

methods employed by the League in pursuit of its legislative aims were considered authoritarian, subsequently enhancing opposition to it and the criticism it received from its own supporters. Therefore instead of unifying the temperance movement, which was the League's aim, its unrelenting campaign began to weaken its position and marginalise prohibitionist ideas.

The alignment between the Home Rule movement and the drink trade from the 1880s introduced a political element to the Irish drink question. This placed the League in an awkward position as many of its arguments for Sunday Closing, the Permissive Bill and Local Option had what could be perceived as nationalist connotations. However in the face of this, the ITL's pan-Protestant character allowed it to align temperance with its religious identity. The temperance movement became subordinate to the national crisis. Following this it became increasingly necessary for the Irish temperance movement to unite on a common platform if it was to have any chance at a legislative success. In the early twentieth century the legislative organisations in the Irish temperance movement consolidated under the umbrella of the INTE. By stepping back and working in connection with others the ITL clearly learned to compromise in order to strengthen the legislative fight.

Notwithstanding its best attempts, the political tensions in Ireland destroyed the perceived urgency of all other matters. In 1910 the League stated

The intensity of political controversy rather hindered concerted action; but if feelings were not so strong in regard to other political issues, there is no doubt that the temperance sentiment prevailing, especially in the North of Ireland, would have influenced results to a much greater extent.<sup>267</sup>

Again in the run up to the Ulster Crisis in 1912 the ITL stated they were not able to secure any temperance legislation due to 'the parliamentary programme and the strength of Party Political agitation through the county'.<sup>268</sup> Following the outbreak of the war in 1914, culture and identity unequivocally changed in Ireland with the development of two

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<sup>267</sup> *ITLRB*, 1910, p.15.

<sup>268</sup> *ITLRB*, 1912, p.43.

significant camps, while political and religious affiliation became inseparable. From 1914 on, the ITL and the Irish temperance movement were in a considerably different Ireland from the one in which it was formed and developed.

The previous two chapters in this research have looked at the dual methodology, which was incorporated by the ITL. The structure of the League's approach to the temperance movement connected these two traditionally separate methods but it also allowed room for individual preference, effectively uniting difference temperance reformers under its umbrella. The following chapter will consider the religious ideologies behind the League's work. Was the ITL's temperance movement an evangelical crusade or was it a secular movement, which desired to modernise society?

## Chapter Five

### Religion

*However excellent and temperate you may be, it is not your duty to drink. There is no command from the heaven above, or from the earth beneath, compelling you to taste.*

*Irish Temperance League Journal - October 1863*

When the Irish temperance movement was formed in 1829 it had a religious ethos. However over this period the temperance movement evolved towards secularization. Thus over the nineteenth and early twentieth century the temperance movement was on a spectrum with religious and secular ideologies at either end. Four main periods, Pre-1858, 1856-1865, 1865-1890, and Post-1890, characterized the temperance movement's trajectory from religiosity to secularization. This chapter takes a chronological approach to the Irish temperance movement to analyse the phases in the relationship between temperance and organized religion; these have been touched upon in previously but will be expanded in this chapter. It will consider the ITL's position within this spectrum and look at its relationship to both religious and secular ideologies. This chapter will argue that the founding members of the ITL were not influenced by religious ideologies to the same extent as their predecessors in the Irish temperance movement had been, and were increasingly influenced by secular advances. As a result the founding members purposely placed the organisation in the middle of this spectrum thus enabling the League to incorporate both religious and secular methods in its work.

#### ***Pre-1858***

Most of the Protestant denominations in Ireland in the early to mid-nineteenth century espoused temperance values. Traditionally these reflected moderationist ideologies and only drunkenness was to be avoided, due to its denunciation in the Bible. Yet before the late 1890s the Catholic Church in Ireland avoided the temperance movement. Even during

Father Mathew's Crusade, which had a large Catholic following, the Irish Catholic Church avoided official connections. This was due to several overlapping factors; doctrinal issues with the total abstinence pledge, a perceived unnecessary fight against a substance which was not illegal and seemingly approved within the Bible, the superstition surrounding Father Mathew himself, and the political affiliations with the Nationalist Repeal movement. Historians state that the Catholic Church's unwillingness to support the temperance movement was made evident at the Synod of Thurles in 1850 when no reference was made to the movement despite the popularity that had surrounded Father Mathew's crusade.<sup>1</sup> Following this, the sabbatarian values of the Sunday closing movement in the 1860s and the movement's perceived Protestant character continued to strengthen the divide between the Catholic Church and the temperance movement.<sup>2</sup> That being said there were Catholics such as Father John Spratt, leader of the Dublin Total Abstinence Society, involved within the temperance movement albeit in an individual capacity and not as a representative of official Church opinions.<sup>3</sup> It was only in 1870 that the hierarchy of the Catholic Church began to discuss temperance issues and acknowledge a movement which had been functioning in Ireland for almost fifty years. It was not until the 1890s, however, that the Church had an official total abstinence association in the form of the Pioneers, which were discussed in Chapter Three. Yet it was not just the Catholic Church who avoided the temperance movement at this stage. The Church of Ireland was also reluctant to become involved.<sup>4</sup> Like the Church of England, it was late to take up the anti-drink cause with nothing happening before 1862.<sup>5</sup> Therefore while neither the Catholic Church nor the Church of Ireland commended drunkenness, neither was willing be involved in an issue which had the potential to cause a denominational split.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Elizabeth Malcolm, 'The Catholic Church and the Irish Temperance Movement 1838 – 1901' in *Irish Historical Studies*, 23 (1982), p.5; Townend, p.260.

<sup>2</sup> Malcolm, 'The Catholic Church', p.5-6.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Malcolm, p.286

<sup>5</sup> Ibid; McAllister, p.846.

<sup>6</sup> Malcolm, p.286.

Comparatively the hierarchy of the Society of Friends (Quakers) insisted on upon moderation, which was included within its denominational rules.<sup>7</sup> If this rule was broken and an individual indulged in drunkenness, members could be expelled or disowned from the society. The effects of breaking this rule were more severe than those laid out in the temperance pledge issued by the UTS at this time, which could be renewed if broken. This shows the importance the Society of Friends placed upon the temperance character of its members. In the 1830s the Society discussed the promotion of total abstinence after which it was decided that the final decision of whether to abandon alcohol or to continue in moderation would be left to the individual. This remained the position of the Society into the late nineteenth century. In an article in 1879 Henry Barcroft stated

the majority of Friends have gradually become total abstainers. The numbers who since the early days of the movement have assisted in promoting the cause is very considerable – in proportion to the total number of Friends in the three kingdoms it would be large.<sup>8</sup>

Similarly, the Methodist denomination also had a long tradition of temperance. This reflected the opinions of John Wesley in the eighteenth century who advised his followers in 1744 ‘to avoid spirituous liquors’.<sup>9</sup> This was incorporated into the denominational rules which stated that members should refrain from ‘buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them unless in cases of extreme necessity or prescribed by a physician.’<sup>10</sup> Beer however was an acceptable drink, and until the end of the nineteenth century it was traditional for a keg to be provided for refreshments following the quarterly meetings.<sup>11</sup>

The Methodist Church had a long-standing moderationist character which dates back to the eighteenth century. Therefore when the anti-spirits movement appeared in Ireland in 1829, individuals from this denomination were among Edgar’s first supporters.<sup>12</sup> For instance following the formation of the UTS in 1829 Edgar began holding public

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<sup>7</sup> Henry Barcroft, ‘The Society of Friends Work’, in Sherlock, p.96.

<sup>8</sup> Barcroft, p.96.

<sup>9</sup> Dudley Levistone Cooney, *The Methodists in Ireland, A Short History* (Dublin: The Columba Press, 2001), p.219.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, p.66.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, p.220.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p.221.



temperance meetings. However as Edgar's own church was too small, he requested the use of a larger building for the first event.<sup>13</sup> When the Presbyterian Church refused Edgar's request, Mathew Tobias, who was a senior member of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, made his premises available for the event. Thus the first ever speech delivered in Ulster on the topic of temperance was given at the Methodist church, located on Donegall Square in Belfast.<sup>14</sup> In 1830 the Methodist Conference formally approved of the rules of the UTS and the promotion of temperance throughout Ireland. It was stated that

we enforce the rules instituted by the founder of our society, which prohibit the buying or selling of spirituous liquors, or drinking them unless in cases of extreme necessity and we cordially approve of the principle of the societies lately established for the encouragement and promotion of temperance.<sup>15</sup>

The addition of the pledge under the auspice of the UTS merely tightened a practice, which had been in place in the Methodist Church for many years. Dudley Levistone Cooney states that when the total abstinence movement appeared in Ireland in the 1830s it developed rapidly 'outside Methodist circles as well as within.'<sup>16</sup> Following this the Church stressed the need for total abstinence among its members though, like the Society of Friends it never made this an official rule. However the Methodist Church displayed a preference for total abstinence when it declared that anyone involved in the liquor trade could not be nominated to office in a congregation.<sup>17</sup>

It was the Presbyterian Church that struggled most with the temperance question in this period. The refusal to accommodate Edgar with larger premises in 1829 suggests that the Presbyterian Church was opposed to, or at the least uninterested in, this new movement at that stage. This was to remain the official position of the Presbyterian Church until the 1840s despite the fact temperance had a significant level of support from the members of clergy and the laity of this denomination. By the 1840s the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

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<sup>13</sup> Rev Harkness, 'Temperance in the Presbyterian Church of Ireland', in Sherlock, p.61.

<sup>14</sup> Armstrong, 'The Irish Methodist Church and Temperance', in *Fifty Years Ago*, by Sherlock p.66.

<sup>15</sup> Crookshank, *History of Methodism in Ireland* (Belfast: n.p. 1885) p.150.

<sup>16</sup> Cooney, p.221.

<sup>17</sup> R.Lee Cole, *History of Methodism in Ireland* (Belfast: Irish Methodist Church, 1960), p.36.

was urging the Presbyteries throughout Ireland to promote proper Sabbath observance. Sabbatarianism, with its emphasis on respectability and conservative conduct on the seventh day, naturally lead to growing concerns over the sale and consumption of alcohol on a Sunday. Thus in 1849 the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland was ‘presented with a memorial regarding the “profanation of the Sabbath by the sale of spirituous liquor on the Lord’s Day”’.<sup>18</sup>

Yet it was not until 1854 that temperance was discussed at the General Assembly, following which a temperance committee was appointed with Rev William Johnston of Townsend Street Presbyterian Church as convener.<sup>19</sup> The General Assembly’s temperance committee educated the public on temperance through the use of tracts and it agitated for one Sunday a month to be dedicated to temperance in local presbyteries. All of these measures largely concentrated on the link between Sabbath observance and desecration, and the fight for Sunday closing. There was a strong connection between temperance and Sabbath observance, which was formalized by the Church in 1860 when the Sabbath and temperance committees merged.<sup>20</sup> However, as Malcolm argues, by concentrating on Sunday closing the Presbyterian Church could temporarily avoid the issues surrounding moderation and total abstinence. This was particularly important within the Church in Belfast where the debate over moderation versus total abstinence was particularly heated, as there were avid supporters on both sides. For instance Edgar, who was on the Assembly’s temperance committee, was vehemently opposed to total abstinence. In 1841 he stated ‘I entertain the most confirmed abhorrence of teetotalism, as insulting to God and disgraceful to man.’<sup>21</sup> However in Belfast some of the clergy were quickly developing a total abstinence character. In 1850, four years before the Church’s official moderationist committee was developed, an estimated twenty ministers joined together in May Street

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<sup>18</sup> *Minutes of the Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, 1849, p.34.

<sup>19</sup> Malcolm, p.157.

<sup>20</sup> *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland*, 1851 – 61.

<sup>21</sup> George Harris, *The Christian Pioneer* (Glasgow, 1841), p.321.

Church, and formed a total abstinence association for Presbyterian clergy.<sup>22</sup> The association was founded on the principle of Christian expediency, which held that while alcohol was not unlawful, its ‘abuse and destructive nature dictated that abstinence was the rightful charitable duty’.<sup>23</sup> Therefore even before the Presbyterian Church had formalized its moderationist position on temperance, there was clearly an undercurrent of clerical support for total abstinence in Belfast. It also demonstrates willingness on the part of individuals such as Morgan and Johnston, who were involved in the teetotal association, to make a stand against official church practice and advance total abstinence.

By 1853 the number of individual clergy with total abstinence values had expanded. This led the Belfast Presbytery to form an official committee to consider intemperance and work with local total abstinence and prohibition organisations to oppose licenses. It was the Belfast Presbytery that presented the memorial to the General Assembly in 1854 requesting the development of the aforementioned temperance committee of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.<sup>24</sup> By forming an association with a moderate position the Presbyterian Church was retaining continuity with contemporary religious opinions on the temperance question. Due to the minority position of teetotal clergy at this point, some found themselves involved in the Church’s moderationist work. For instance Rev William Johnston was convener of the General Assembly’s moderation committee, and was simultaneously a member of the teetotal association and the secretary of the Belfast branch of the UKA, which was established in 1854.<sup>25</sup> That fact that Johnston was at the same time part of moderationist, total abstinence, and prohibitionist organisations demonstrates how quickly the temperance movement, and its individual reformers, evolved in Ulster. In addition, when no preferable temperance organisation was to be found individuals such as Johnston and Morgan, who were teetotallers but working on a moderationist committee, demonstrated a willingness to join a

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<sup>22</sup> Harkness, p.62.

<sup>23</sup> Malcolm, p.159.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p.157.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

range of organisations and mitigate divisions across different methods and approaches to temperance.

While there was a growing acceptance of total abstinence in the period before 1858, the churches' temperance character officially remained moderationist. In all denominations, it was only a radical few, mainly evangelicals, who were active temperance advocates. As Hempton and Hill state, certain evangelical practices in the early nineteenth century had 'encouraged an individualism which was difficult to control.'<sup>26</sup>

Evangelicalism, a movement of religious ideas, which emerged in the mid-eighteenth century, emphasized individual redemption and the destruction of individual sin. It has been described, as a vertical relationship between God, one's spiritual needs, and personal salvation. There was a belief that if individuals could 'be converted to Christ this would bring a moral transformation which would inevitably enable them to improve their material conditions.'<sup>27</sup> While moral transformation of society was desired this was perceived to be inferior to, and reliant upon a religious transformation. Thus the primary objective of evangelical philanthropy in the early to mid-nineteenth century was conservative and focused on spreading the word of God in an attempt to save souls.<sup>28</sup>

In order to attract the working classes, some evangelicals took their crusade outside the church and began to preach the 'Word of God' in more accessible places such as open-air settings and theatres.<sup>29</sup> Olivia Checkland's work, which looks at philanthropy in Scotland, has described this as 'the object of inducing piety in a pure form' as it was solely focused on religious reform.<sup>30</sup> In Ulster there were attempts to accommodate the spiritual needs of the poor through similar philanthropic endeavours. Hempton and Hill state that this

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<sup>26</sup> Hempton and Hill p.62.

<sup>27</sup> John Wolffe, 'Introduction' in *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal, Evangelicals and Society in Britain 1870-1980* ed. by John Wolffe (London: SPCK, 1995), p.12.

<sup>28</sup> Dominic Erdozain, 'The secularization of sin in the nineteenth century', in *The Journal Of Ecclesiastical History*, 62 (2011), p.79.

<sup>29</sup> Hempton and Hill, p.106.

<sup>30</sup> Checkland, *Philanthropy in Victorian Scotland*, p.90.

new religious fervour promoted an immense investment in human and material resources, reflected in additional Sabbath schools, prayer meetings, home visitation and the enlargement of churches.<sup>31</sup>

These were an attempt to enhance the religiosity and respectability of the poor in Belfast.

Rev James Morgan, founding member and V.P of the ITL, had been involved in church expansion in Belfast in this period.<sup>32</sup> Morgan embodies the link between the Irish temperance movement, official religion, and evangelical philanthropy in this period.

The formation of societies became the dominant mode through which evangelical philanthropy, aimed at personal salvation, was expressed.<sup>33</sup> Evangelicals began to attack leisure activities perceived to be inappropriate and thus blocking the path of personal salvation. Drunkenness was believed to be the source of poverty, crime and a wide range of inappropriate behaviours. Therefore the fight against alcohol was a weapon in the evangelical crusade, which attempted to clear the path to personal salvation.<sup>34</sup> Yet temperance was not a key theology for evangelicals at this stage. It was simply part of living a Christian life and an integral part of a wider attempt at the evangelisation of Ireland.<sup>35</sup> For instance Malcolm mentions the work of the Belfast Town Mission, which was formed in 1827. This was an interdenominational society, which attempted to extend religious ideologies into the poorest parts of Belfast. The records of the Belfast Town Mission describe it as ‘a moral engine for the benefit of the poor.’<sup>36</sup> The mission concentrated on visiting the poor, reading the Gospels, and inviting the poor to church on Sunday.<sup>37</sup> Temperance values increasingly became incorporated within its objectives. Leading temperance individuals such as, Rev Edgar and Rev Morgan, were both

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<sup>31</sup> Hempton and Hill, p.112.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, p.111.

<sup>33</sup> Brian Dickey, “Going About and Doing Good”, *Evangelicals and Poverty 1815 – 1870*, in *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal, Evangelicals and Society in Britain 1870-1980* ed. by John Wolffe (London: SPCK, 1995), p.41.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, pp.117-118.

<sup>35</sup> Malcolm, p.160.

<sup>36</sup> Sibber, *For Christ and the Crown*, referenced in Hempton and Hill, p. 115.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

secretaries of the Belfast Town Mission and therefore the growing prominence of temperance within this organisation was possibly a reflection of their influence.<sup>38</sup>

The bulk of clerical opinion at this stage did not support a programme of temperance reform. Father Mathew's movement had the support of the population but conversely however did not have the support of the institutional Catholic Church. In Protestant communities, temperance reform during this stage was mainly the preoccupation of evangelicals and did not have not institutional endorsement. It was within this context of temperance as part of evangelical mission work that Edgar's anti-spirits movement developed.<sup>39</sup> The moderationist character of the UTS at this stage reflects general evangelical opinion, which tended to be suspicious of total abstinence as it was a method typically promoted by atheists.<sup>40</sup> Formed two years after the Belfast Town Mission, the formation of the UTS represents the point at which temperance became a stand-alone movement. Yet at this stage it reflected strong evangelical ideologies as it focused on saving souls as opposed to those who had already succumb to sin.

The three alterations within the temperance movement, highlighted in Chapter One as the introduction of moderation, total abstinence, and legislation, all originated and stagnated within this period. Organisations such as the Belfast Total Abstinence Association (BTAA), the Overseer movement, and the Belfast Auxiliary of the UKA, did have individual clerical support but functioned independently of any denomination. By the 1850s these organisations had made numerous attempts to advance reform throughout Ireland, however the churches continued to remain indifferent to their claims in terms of the need for temperance and moral reform. The chapter will now go onto discuss how the lack of official church support was perceived to be problematic for the founding members of the ITL and which caused the organisation to be formed with the core objective of agitating for an increase in church intervention in the temperance movement.

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<sup>38</sup> Malcolm, p.160.

<sup>39</sup> Harrison, p.187

<sup>40</sup> W.R Lambert, *Drink and Sobriety in Victorian Wales 1820-1895* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1983), p.118.

## **1858 – c1865**

W.R Lambert argues that in Wales ‘the passion for personal salvation tended to produce the self-reliant person who had little interest in social reform.’<sup>41</sup> Similarities are identifiable in Belfast where current evangelical efforts, providing for the spiritual needs of the poor were failing to produce any significant moral or social change within society in the mid nineteenth century.<sup>42</sup> By the late 1850s there was a changing perception of temperance, and its relationship to social and moral reform, growing among some evangelicals. The continuing social issues led to the growing acknowledgement of the connection between the social and spiritual condition of the people.<sup>43</sup> James Morgan, in particular, regularly brought up the issue of drunkenness and how it prevented the poor attending places of public worship at BTM meetings.<sup>44</sup> The evolution of Morgan’s ideas reflects contemporary changes in Victorian religion, which increasingly began to concentrate on moral reform.<sup>45</sup> The need for moral and social reform was gaining prominence along with the growing recognition of collective responsibility. Dominic Erdozain has described this as a shift from the vertical relationship between the individual and God, to a horizontal relationship between God, the individual, and society.<sup>46</sup>

It was within this context that the ITL was formed in 1858. Underpinning all of the ITL’s work was a basic commitment to evangelical Christianity. The new organisation provided a platform through which teetotal clergy could express ideas, which their own churches were opposed to. There was a significant clerical element to the core leadership of the ITL, in particular the VP position. However no amount of individual clergy would suffice and the ITL wanted the hierarchy of the churches publically and officially to

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<sup>41</sup> Lambert, p.118.

<sup>42</sup> Hempton and Hill, pp. 111-112.

<sup>43</sup> Wolffe, p.12.

<sup>44</sup> *BNL*, 3 November 1858.

<sup>45</sup> Harrison, p.187.

<sup>46</sup> Erdozain, p.61.

endorse total abstinence.<sup>47</sup> Thus the League's agitation in this period was directed to towards institutional structures. The League argued that due to the influential position of local clergy, the churches must make abstinence compulsory in order to set a moral example otherwise, it would never be able to influence the workingmen. It argued that, as teachers of religion, it was the clergy's

bounden duty, as professing belief in the writing of the Old and New Testament, to abstain entirely from, and not to touch, those drinks which are causing thousands on thousands of their poor brothers and sisters, believers in the same Saviour in whom they themselves believe, to stumble and fall and sink into everlasting ruin.<sup>48</sup>

Essentially the League was attempting to increase church intervention in the drink question in the same manner as it agitated for an increase in state intervention. Underpinning this was the belief that total abstinence would be strengthened with the dual support of the Church and the State.

Mayne's 'moral reform' letter in 1856, which was the forerunner to the formation of the ITL, can be taken as the first attack against the Protestant churches in Ireland. This began the often-strained relationship between the League and the Irish churches, as the League remained quite critical of what it considered to be church institutions dragging their heels on total abstinence regulations. Underpinning this was a belief that the lack of church support added to the failure of the previous phases of the temperance movement. Mayne clearly stated that his fundamental reason for wanting to stimulate the temperance movement was due to the 'great apathy of ministers and churches'.<sup>49</sup> From this letter one could easily assume that the churches in Ireland avoided the temperance questions. However as has been shown this was not the case. In reality it was the moderationist character of the churches that Mayne took issue with, as this was perceived to be in opposition to the total abstinence principles that Mayne and his peers held as the key to

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<sup>47</sup> Malcolm, p.276.

<sup>48</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1863, p.135.

<sup>49</sup> *BNL*, 26 January 1856.



reform. The letter was essentially an attack on the leading men of the church who, he argued, were responsible for maintaining drinking practices.

Members of the League described themselves as religious individuals, who respected the ministry, and who felt it a duty, privilege and a pleasure to go to the house of God from Sabbath to Sabbath.<sup>50</sup> However the League continued to reiterate the ideas expressed in Mayne's letter. For instance an article in 1863 echoed similar arguments stating that 'the Christian Church in these countries is most culpably indifferent to the fearful miseries, both temporal and eternal, which are produced by the liquor traffic existing among us.'<sup>51</sup> Up until the 1870s the churches continued to maintain a moderationist approach to temperance. This convinced the ITL that it was justified in maintaining continuous agitation, against what it perceived as a lack of church support for moral reform, until the hierarchy of the churches publically supported the total abstinence cause.

The League believed that, as an organisation, it was doing God's work and was resolute that the Holy Spirit was guiding its members to enlighten society.<sup>52</sup> Essentially the ITL saw themselves as progressive individuals who believed that abstinence was the key to moral reform, which would modernize society. Due to a strong belief such as this, it is clear to see how it enhanced the League's condescending and righteous attitude towards other philanthropic and religious organisations, as is discussed in Chapter Two. Subsequently at times the language used by the League was bordered on the threatening to those with whom it did not agree. For instance the League stated that

our feelings towards the ministry are something like those of the Rev. Dr. Lyman Beecher towards the American Legislators when he prayed "O Lord grant we may not despise our rulers, but do grant they may not so act that we can't help it."<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> *ITLJ*, November 1866, p.119.

<sup>51</sup> *ITLJ*, September 1863, p.135.

<sup>52</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1865, p.135.

<sup>53</sup> *ITLJ*, November 1866, p.119.

From the League's perspective, the pious character of its members and their belief in the importance of moral reform placed them in a superior position from which it could criticize all others for their perceived moral failings.

Despite attempts to increase the churches' involvement in the total abstinence movement, the ITL always maintained a distance between itself and the hierarchy of the churches in Ireland. This is reflected in the fact that no member of the clergy sat on the executive committee of the League. It is possible the members of the executive committee foresaw the increasingly secular methods that the total abstinence movement would have to eventually adapt to, and this evolution would have been challenging had the League been strongly connected to a religious body. Many of the League's founding members had been actively involved the Irish temperance movement and witnessed its weaknesses and failures. Therefore they had come to the realisation that piety was not enough to effect lasting change.<sup>54</sup> It had to be coupled with tangible changes to one's life in order to attract and maintain members.

The ITL believed that drink was the source of evil through which Satan tempted the weak.<sup>55</sup> Therefore consuming alcohol was in direct antagonism to the glory of God, and the good of man.<sup>56</sup> It was both a religious and a moral wrong and any attempt at reform had to incorporate both. Thus the ITL advocated a generic set of Christian values such as respectability, self-denial, and temptation but from the League's perspective while these were vital individual principles they also had a strong social value as they were setting an example to others by demonstrating appropriate behaviour. The League believed that more effort was needed to bring about substantial reform within society. Underpinning this was a belief that current philanthropic endeavours were lazy, merely talking about helping others but failing to act due to the effort it would take. For instance the League stated

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<sup>54</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1866, p.45.

<sup>55</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1866, p.123.

<sup>56</sup> *ITLJ*, November 1866, p.119.

it is easier to speculate than to act. Thoughts, words, images, can be produced cheaply; but effort, conduct, self-denial are rare commodities, and therefore cost much.<sup>57</sup>

For the League, the burden of guilt had migrated from self to social. Underpinning the League's philosophies was a firm belief in the aforementioned horizontal relationship between God, individuals, and society. The League argued that

the motto of the ministry should be "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and good will towards men." Whatever stands against God's glory and man's welfare ministers are bound by the strongest obligations to resist, even to the death if necessary.<sup>58</sup>

Thus the League put forth the idea that it was a Christian duty to resist alcohol, underpinned by the concept of respectability. This was a common ideology throughout nineteenth century evangelical philanthropy, and many societies attempted to promote so-called "respectability" among the working classes.<sup>59</sup> However unlike previous evangelical missions which equated respectability with religious observance and personal morality, the ITL equated respectability with sobriety and social morality. There was a general consensus among the more affluent members of society that the respectability of the working classes was destroyed by their drinking habits and behaviour which stemmed from those habits. However the ITL argued that through total abstinence the working classes could gain respectability, which they could in turn use as a platform from which to build a better life. Underpinning these ideas was also the principle of redemption. The League stated that 'many thousands of immortal souls annually consigned to eternal perdition, under the sentence "the drunkard shall not inherit the kingdom of God."<sup>60</sup> However unlike moderationists, who generally considered drunkards a lost cause, the League argued that they could be saved from eternal damnation. For instance the League stated in 1863 that

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<sup>57</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1863, p.115.

<sup>58</sup> *ITLJ*, November 1866, p.119.

<sup>59</sup> Hempton and Hill, p.113.

<sup>60</sup> *ITLJ*, November 1866, p.120.

if we could reform drunkards, (and it is our duty to labour for the salvation of all, even the most depraved), we must urge upon them entire abstinence as the only means of regaining what they have sinfully thrown away.<sup>61</sup>

Through employing working class men and women to run their coffee kiosks, the League attempted to demonstrate quantifiable data for their ideals. The suggested journey from perceived poverty to stability and respectability through abstinence, contrasted with many of the ideas in the League's magic lantern slides, which illustrated the reverse.

The ITL practiced what it called Christian temperance, described as 'acting on what you know about drink, as God would have you to act.'<sup>62</sup> This statement symbolized the League's belief in setting a moral example to others through total abstinence. These ideas underpinned the League's arguments against publicans and brewers. Individuals in these professions were often important figures in the community, and exhibited philanthropic character. For example the Guinness family in Dublin were religious, church-going individuals and well-known philanthropists, yet they often were subject to the wrath of the ITL.<sup>63</sup> Members of the League, particularly businessmen, argued that their peers in the drink trade could not be considered respectable members of the community, regardless of their religious or philanthropic endeavours. From the League's perspective, these individuals made financial gains from other's despair and therefore were morally corrupt themselves. As the proprietors of the businesses were aware of the evils of drink, and made no attempt to mitigate said evils, their piety was hypocritical.<sup>64</sup> There are similarities here to the League's issues with the churches; piety was redundant so long as they failed to support total abstinence. For instance the League stated

let us have the Gospel by all means; but in the name of religion, reason and common sense do not plant public houses in its path, and thus pull down with one hand what you built with the other.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1863, p.135.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p.119.

<sup>63</sup> Andy Bielenberg, 'Late Victorian Elite Formation and Philanthropy: The Making of Edward Guinness' in *Studia Hibernica*, 32 (2003), pp.133-154.

<sup>64</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1863, p.135.

<sup>65</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1865, p.87.

In 1866 the League stated that ‘abstinence is set forth as an act of Christian self-denial to be practiced for the general good.’<sup>66</sup> As Hempton and Hill argue, in nineteenth century Ulster ‘self-denial was seen as the foundation of more than mere religious reform.’<sup>67</sup> Thus the League was placing self-denial as a prerequisite for the moral reform of the community. Self-denial was the essential element needed so that society would not place temptation in the way of the weak. The League stated that

our blessed Saviour had taught us to pray “lead us not into temptation” and every act of His life on earth was in perfect harmony with that petition, which could not be said in truth regarding a moderate drinking example.<sup>68</sup>

Temptation was a strong theme throughout the history of the ITL and its connotation is undeniably religious. For instance, the ITL’s gender specific notions about the polarized morality of women had strong religious connotations. An article in *The Journal* in 1865 stated

If then our first mother, in all the unsullied purity of her primeval innocence, fell before a temptation which was presented to a single sense, how shall the reformed inebriate stand before one which for years, had led all his senses captive?<sup>69</sup>

The League was suggesting to readers here that if Eve, a pure being who lived in a perfect world, was not strong enough to fight temptation, how then could society expect a reformed drunkard to withstand all the temptations placed in front of him on a daily basis? Many of the League’s issues with moderation were essentially based upon the temptation it placed upon the drunkard. Thus temptation underpinned the values of redemption, respectability, and social morality, which the League impressed upon the middle and upper classes. The idea was that all those who were in any way connected to the drink trade were responsible for the crimes and deprivation that came with it. The anxiety, which fuelled the ITL’s activism, reflected a fear of his or her own sin and personal salvation as much as it was a desire to bring about moral reform. For instance in 1863 the League stated

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<sup>66</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1866, p.143.

<sup>67</sup> Hempton and Hill, p.118.

<sup>68</sup> *ITLJ*, November 1866, p.122.

<sup>69</sup> *ITLJ*, July 1865, p.97.

we are told that if the watchman does not preform his duty and give warning of the approaching danger, the blood of those destroyed through his carelessness will be required at his hands.<sup>70</sup>

However it was not just temperance reformers who held these concerns. Erdozain discusses the work of Rodger Anstey who stated that even as early as the late eighteenth century those involved in the abolition movement were fuelled by a

desolating conviction of their own sin, the assurance that sin was forgiven and could be overcome by the grace of God, and the consequential assurance that they could overcome the sin of and in other men by the same grace.<sup>71</sup>

In essence the League was suggesting to the middle classes that if they did not set a moral example for the greater good, they were no better than the drunkards who acted sinfully and thus were incapable of redemption. The concept of collective responsibility for the welfare of the community was driving the ITL.

The welfare of the community forbids free trade in drink, for, however publicans may wish to make money, cost what it may, and compromise as it must their own conscience, and respectability, and soul, as well as the bodies and souls of those whose fearful appetite they whet and gorge for gain, men of all classes and denominations are one in seeking to sustain the sobriety and the respectability of their community.<sup>72</sup>

Clearly the ITL was influenced by religious ideas during this period (1858-1865). Fundamentally however the League wanted to promote a united movement in which temperance reformers of any kind could unite against the foe. Thus a range of religious methods can be found within the organisation. For instance *The Journal* is packed with religious articles and symbolism. Many of the arguments highlighted in Chapter Three under the League's moral suasion work had religious connotations and were undeniably an attempt to protect citizens against sin. In addition there were many members of the League who continued to argue that temperance was the handmaiden to religion.<sup>73</sup> However from the League's perspective religion was not a requirement for moral reform. Thus the League

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<sup>70</sup> *ITLJ*, September 1863, p.135.

<sup>71</sup> Rodger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760-1810*, quoted in Erdzoian, p.71.

<sup>72</sup> *ITLJ*, November 1863, p.158.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, p.87.

incorporated ideas which distinguished it from evangelicalism, which was primarily concerned with the soul and the interior life. For the some members of the ITL, religion could be a part of a temperance lifestyle but it was not the key. Harrison highlights similarities within the English temperance movement where total abstainers ‘stressed purely secular motives and attempted to supersede doctrinal and liturgical controversy by a united crusade for moral reform.’<sup>74</sup>

For instance a belief in the horizontal relationship and a need to help society, also required the belief that looking after the earthly body was as important as protecting one’s soul. In 1865 Rev Robert Ross from Derry published an article in *The Journal*, entitled ‘Moral obligation to do all things to the Glory of God.’ This article argued that alcohol was injurious to the body and discounted its medicinal qualities. It further explains that it was the

duty of every man to maintain his body in the highest possible state of soundness and energy, that so it may minister to the wants of the spirit in such a way as it could not do if debilitated and disordered by disease.<sup>75</sup>

This article clearly demonstrated that the ITL believed the body to be as important as the soul. Clearly the ITL was influenced by ‘modern’ attitudes to health and the body. By protecting one’s body from alcohol, teetotal organisations were suggesting that man had a degree of control over his fate. This essentially rejected the religious conviction that held that disease was divinely ordained.<sup>76</sup> Thus, opponents of the League, and total abstinence organisations in general, claimed that they exaggerated the extent of the evil of alcohol.<sup>77</sup> Lambert states that ‘the strongest Christian opponents of social reform were those who believed most completely that body and soul were antithetical.’<sup>78</sup>

Conversionist evangelicalism was never part of the ITL’s agenda. While it is possible that affiliated societies of the League, who were connected to local churches, did practice

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<sup>74</sup> Harrison, p.186.

<sup>75</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1865, p.139.

<sup>76</sup> Harrison, p.186; Wolffe, p.12.

<sup>77</sup> H. Vere White, *Temperance Versus Total Abstinence* (Dublin: n.p. 1884).

<sup>78</sup> Lambert, p.118.

conversionist temperance, the League as an organisation did not. As a result the League was removed from issues surrounding proselytization and denominational competition which enabled it to promote itself as a platform for all. This also allowed the ITL the possibility to work with its Catholic peers as and when required such as the connection between the sections of the Catholic and Protestant temperance movements during the Sunday Closing movement in the 1860s.

Erdozian states that the move away from conversionist tactics was common throughout Britain and in many societies by the late nineteenth century, the focus on conversions to religious groups had been relegated to second place.<sup>79</sup> However from the 1850s commitment to total abstinence superseded religious conversion within the League. In 1866 the League went as far as to advise followers to join other congregations or start their own organisation if their local minister was not supporting total abstinence.<sup>80</sup> The League also offered advice to those wanting to set up their own total abstinence association when no supporting clergy could be found.<sup>81</sup> Pyper's trips to Killarney, discussed in Chapter Three, in order to protect the local association against an unsupportive minister, show that the League was willing to go to great lengths to support the smallest sign of total abstinence support and would do so without the support of the local clergy.

The League's willingness to surpass religious ideologies with a moral mission caused tension between the League and some of its clerical members. For instance Rev Alexander Gray articulated this uneasy relationship. Gray stated that he

thought Christian Expediency the only way on which to advance total abstinence and like many of his brethren he was somewhat opposed to the advanced views of the League.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Erdozian, p.80.

<sup>80</sup> *ITLJ*, November 1866, p.121.

<sup>81</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1864, p.87.

<sup>82</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1863, p.121.



Gray went on fully to accept the ITL's views and methods, however his sentiments demonstrated the gap between the ITL's approach to total abstinence and that of teetotal clergy.

However the tension between the League and the more pious elements of society was temporarily mitigated due to the onset of the Ulster Revival in 1859. This chapter will now move on to consider the relationship between the ITL and this significant event in the socio-religious history of Ireland.

### ITL and the Ulster Revival

The Christian character of the ITL and the prominence it placed upon moral reform, meant that the organisation flourished within the atmosphere of the Ulster Revival, which broke out among the Protestant community in Co. Antrim in March 1859.<sup>83</sup> The revival was part of a general awakening among Evangelical Protestants which had begun in New York in 1856/57.<sup>84</sup> Contemporaries believed that the revival was a spontaneous event in Ulster.<sup>85</sup> While this was true in terms of the physical manifestations and the intensity of the event, there also had been a desire for a revival in Ulster many years before the 'spontaneous' event occurred. For instance the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church had regularly considered and prayed for religious revival throughout the 1840s and 50s.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, magazines such as the *Irish Presbyterian* regularly called for a revival

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<sup>83</sup> Janice Holmes, *Religious Revivals in Britain and Ireland, 1859 – 1905* (Dublin: Dublin Academic Press, 2001), p.3; Andrew Holmes, 'The Ulster Revival of 1859; Cause and Consequences' in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 63 (2012), p.489.

<sup>84</sup> A, Holmes, 'The Ulster Revival of 1859, p.489; W. H McLaughlin, Rodger Luke, *A Remarkable Trophy of Grace of The '59 Revival in the North of Ireland when over 100,000 were "Turned From Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan to God"* (Belfast, Reprint 1966), p.5; Rev Samuel J Moore, *The History and Prominent Characteristics of the Present Revival in Ballymena and its Neighbourhood* (Ballymena: McCormick and Dunlop, 1859), p.3; McIlwaine, W, *The Revival Movement in Ireland, Johnston's Impartial History of the Revival Movement from its Commencement to the Present Time; with Portraits of Some of the most Distinguished Labourer in the work* (Belfast: n.p.1859), iv, p.3.

<sup>85</sup> Moore, S Rev, *The History and Prominent Characteristics of the Present Revival in Ballymena and its Neighbourhood* (Ballymena: McCormick and Dunlop, 1859), p.iv.

<sup>86</sup> Myrtle Hill, 'Ulster Awakened: The 1859 Revival Reconsidered' in *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 41 (1990), p.443-452; J, Holmes, *Religious Revivals*, p.4.

within the pages of their publication.<sup>87</sup> Therefore, as Holmes argues, when the news of the American revival reached Ulster in the late 1850s ‘it was received by a populace which understood the concept of revival and desired its manifestations among them.’<sup>88</sup> In 1859 it was reported in the *Belfast News-Letter* that

The religious revival in Belfast and its vicinity and indeed throughout the County Antrim, as well as adjoining counties, still continues to be spread. This work is so extensive in character, the numbers convinced of sin are so numerous, and the souls pardoned are so many that it is wholly impossible to convey any adequate idea of what is in reality occurring.<sup>89</sup>

The close proximity between the formation of the ITL and the onset of the Ulster Revival has often linked the two movements. However as has been shown the roots of the ITL as an organisation can be traced back to Mayne’s 1856 letter. In addition many of the League’s members had been active temperance reformers from 1829 and thus embodied the trajectory of the Irish temperance movement. Nonetheless the revival and the ITL were similar movements that benefited from the presence of the other. For instance Hempton and Hill stated that the revival ‘largely ignored conventional ecclesiastical and social boundaries.’<sup>90</sup> As has been shown in previous chapters, similar characteristics are identifiable within the ITL, which held total abstinence above all else, including denominational and religious values. Both were ‘interdenominational in character and knitted together by certain doctrinal principles as well as commitment to necessity of personal conversion and the need to spread the Gospel in order to gain converts.’<sup>91</sup> In terms of the League’s ideologies the personal conversion was the teetotal pledge, its doctrinal principle was lifelong sobriety, and the witness to the benefits of total abstinence represented the gospel. While these were clearly parallel to traditional piety, the religious symbolism is identifiable. As will be shown, much of the rhetoric found during the revival years, notably the prominence of moral reform, the burden of sin, and the connection

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<sup>87</sup> Hempton and Hill, p.xi; Holmes, *Religious Revivals in Britain and Ireland, 1859 – 1905*, p. 4

<sup>88</sup> Holmes, *Religious Revivals*, p.4

<sup>89</sup> *BNL*, 11 June 1859.

<sup>90</sup> Hempton and Hill, p.146.

<sup>91</sup> A, Holmes, ‘The Ulster Revival of 1859, p.489.

between body and soul, correlates with fundamental beliefs of the ITL that it promoted, both before and after the revival.

During the revival years, the ITL emitted a heightened piety and placed more prominence on religious values than it did during any other time between 1858 and 1914. For instance the League's first agent, Benjamin Benson, used the heightened religious enthusiasm of the time to run temperance-cum-revival meetings, allowing him to combine his passions of spreading the Gospel and temperance.<sup>92</sup> In a report sent to Mayne in 1860 it is clear that Benson was conducting prayer meetings as well as temperance lectures.<sup>93</sup> Like many lay-men throughout the revival Benson became an 'experienced preacher who could surpass experienced clergy in influencing large numbers.'<sup>94</sup> During one of Benson's prayer meetings in Lurgan in 1860 it was reported that 'many were affected under the power of God's spirit.'<sup>95</sup> This demonstrated the presence of physical manifestation during temperance meetings during the revival years.

Physical manifestations were often the visual method through which one demonstrated their conversion.<sup>96</sup> For instance at Benson's meeting in Rathfriland in 1860 it was reported that 'two persons under the conviction of sin cried for God's mercy.'<sup>97</sup> Morgan held these manifestations as the 'outward signs of the divine presence'.<sup>98</sup> He argued that

in this, and in other lands, hundreds and thousands of persons have been smitten by an unseen hand, which they could not resist. They have fallen down under it and instantly prostrated in weakness. The bodily affection has been universally accompanied by strong and new mental exercises.<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> *BNL*, 19 January 1860.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>94</sup> Paul Darragh, 'Epidemiological Observations on Episodes of Communicable Psychogenic Illness' (PhD Thesis, Queens University Belfast, 1988), p.460.

<sup>95</sup> *BNL*, 2 April 1860

<sup>96</sup> Andrew Holmes, 'The Experience and Understanding of Religious Revival in Ulster Presbyterianism' in *Irish Historical Studies*, 34 (2005) p.362.

<sup>97</sup> *BNL*, 2 April 1860

<sup>98</sup> Morgan, p.4.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid*, p.5.

Converts reported that prior to the physical manifestations, they felt ‘an agonising sense of sin’ which seized upon their soul.<sup>100</sup> These physical manifestations were a visual illustration of the link between the Divine, the individual’s soul, and their body. As stated previously, the ITL were resolute on the link between the body and soul, and the need to look after both in the name of God. Thus it is clear to see why Morgan, as a revivalist and a member of the ITL, was supportive. However these physical outbursts also represented one of the most contentious elements of the Ulster Revival as many saw them as proof of mass hysteria. Rev Isaac Nelson, one of the fiercest opponents of the revival, stated that

To connect such conditions of body with religion at all, much less to attribute them to the direct interference of the Holy Spirit, can only be accounted for by the very great ignorance on such matter, which really prevails society.<sup>101</sup>

Yet Morgan explained during a sermon on the revival in 1859 ‘we are affected more by what we see and hear, than by that which is invisible and purely spiritual.’<sup>102</sup> While this comment was in defence of the physical manifestations that were popular during the revival, it can also be viewed as an explanation of the need for tangible proof of the religious phenomena.

In addition, this was also the League’s fundamental argument for bringing about moral reform of the working classes. For a revival to be considered genuine there should be a visual transformation in society.<sup>103</sup> Supporters of the revival thus began to claim a range of social improvements in attempt to prove that the revival was genuine. These included an increase in manners and piety, a reduction in crime and drunkenness, and a general desire to do good.<sup>104</sup> One article in 1859 stated that

the change from gross vice to virtue was frequently instantaneous. The boisterous and riotous have become quiet and orderly, quarrelsome families live in obedience and love and squalid habits have been given place to cleanliness and brutality of manners to refinement and gentleness.<sup>105</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Morgan, p.5.

<sup>101</sup> Rev Isaac Nelson, *The Year of Delusion* (Belfast: n.p.1860), p.102.

<sup>102</sup> Morgan, p.4.

<sup>103</sup> Holmes, *Religious Revivals*, p.3.

<sup>104</sup> *BNL*, 6 June 1859; *Newry Times*, 5 July 1859

<sup>105</sup> *Quarterly Review*, 5 July 1859

During the revival there was an acceptance, among supporters, that the moral and social reform highlighted in the quote was representative of God's work.<sup>106</sup> Of all the moral improvements, temperance was perhaps the most imperative for the revival in general due to the many vices perceived to come from drunkenness. Thus the decrease in drunkenness, public houses, and the growth of the temperance movement became one of many criteria by which the revival was measured. Endless newspaper reports, pamphlets, and articles throughout Ulster reported on the decrease in drunkenness and 'the high moral tone which now presides in the community.'<sup>107</sup> In August 1859, the *Coleraine Chronicle* reported on the moral effects of the revival. For instance two publicans reportedly gave up their business, not from pressure from others, but rather from a conviction of engaging in a 'sinful, degrading, and soul destroying traffic'.<sup>108</sup> The Dunalong Fair in Derry, commonly regarded as the Donnybrook of the North, passed off in an orderly manner. According to the report 'there was no riots, no drunkenness, and not a single tent for the sale of whiskey was to be seen.'<sup>109</sup>

The importance placed upon sobriety meant that the religious conversion, which was central to the revival, came to symbolize the point at which one became committed to both temporal and religious reform. Therefore, as Harrison argues, the 'Ulster revival had demonstrated the close line between teetotalism and religious transformation.'<sup>110</sup> For instance one convert in Belfast stated that following his conversion he

abandoned the whiskey shop, and is now devoting his earnings to the support and comfort of his family, and although his former companions in crime mock him, yet he ceases not to urge upon them and others to seeks forgiveness as he did.<sup>111</sup>

Thus following his religious conversion to an evangelical lifestyle, this individual became sober and dedicated to his family. Not only was he another recruit to the total abstinence

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<sup>106</sup> *Coleraine Chronicle*, 4 June 1859

<sup>107</sup> *Quarterly Review*, 6 July 1859

<sup>108</sup> *Coleraine Chronicle*, 4 June 1859.

<sup>109</sup> *Coleraine Chronicle*, August 27 1859.

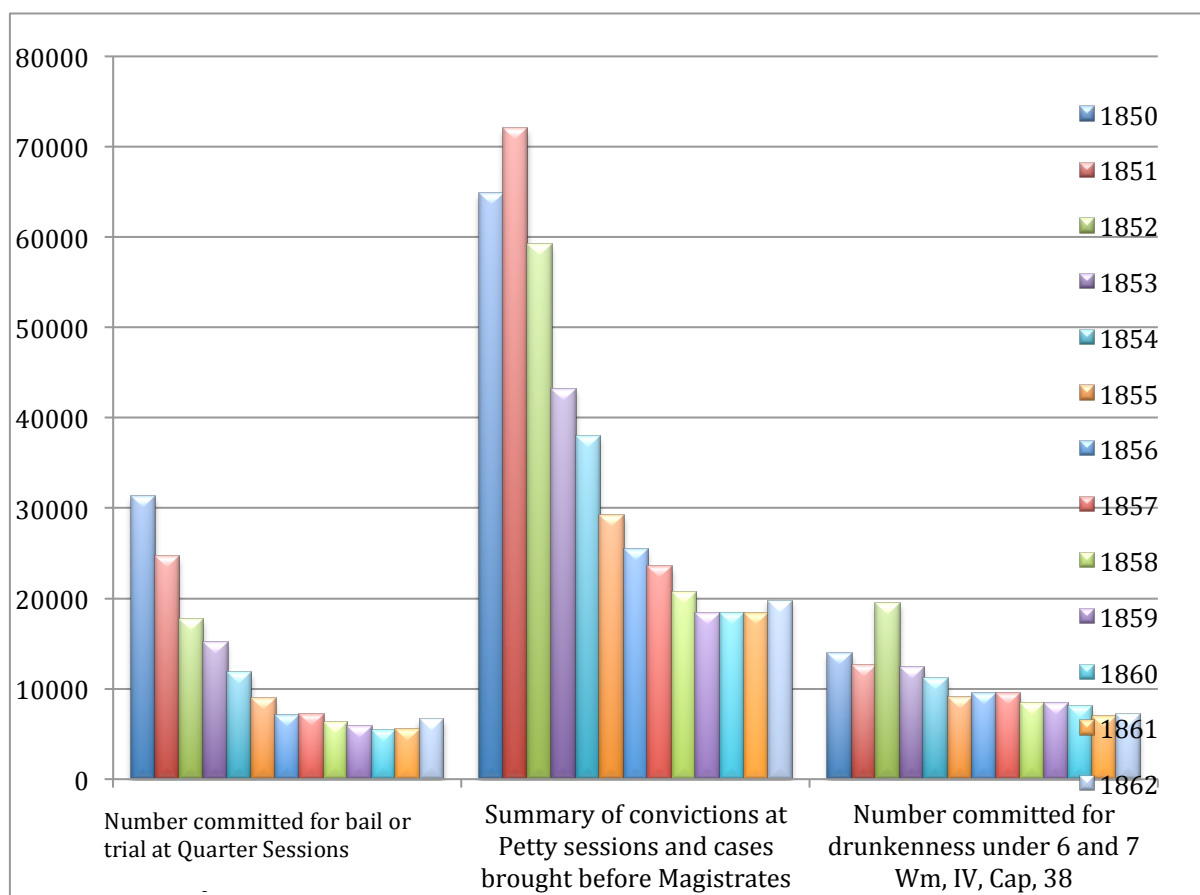
<sup>110</sup> Harrison, p.182.

<sup>111</sup> *BNL*, 18 August 1859.

movement, but he also provided proof of the transformative powers of the revival. In addition he was now dedicated to setting an example to his peers. These were ideas that the ITL had built its organisation upon. Thus it is easy to understand why the League and the revival were symbiotic.

As has been shown, the revival gave a boost to the total abstinence movement and was perceived to contribute to the transformation of Ulster society. Many revivalists used the perceived reduction in crime and drunkenness as proof of the revival. By using crime statistics it is possible to gain an understanding of the reality of any changes that did occur during the revival years. Between 1859 and 1860 there was a decrease in crimes at Quarter Sessions, Petty Sessions and the numbers of arrests for drunkenness in Ulster. This correlates with the first year of the Ulster revival. However correlation does not equal causation and the reality was slightly different to the rhetoric promoted by revivalists. Firstly any the changes during the revival years cannot be looked at in isolation and must be considered within the context of the preceding years (See Figure 5.1). The numbers being committed for bail at the Quarter Sessions was decreasing between 1850 and 1862. This suggests that there was a deduction in the number of serious crimes in Ulster. The number being committed to Petty Sessions on the other hand stayed relatively high with a slight reduction within the same period. Following the 'revival years' both the numbers before the Quarter and Petty sessions increased again in 1861 and 1862 although still maintaining an overall reduction in the period. Arrests for drunkenness were low in comparison to the other two, however numbers increased dramatically in 1852 before falling again until a small increase in 1856. An increase in 1856 albeit slight correlates with the increase in agitation for the revival of the total abstinence movement as evidenced by the efforts of Mayne. From 1857 onwards convictions for drunkenness in Ulster decreased, which correlates with wider social trends away from routine drunkenness towards a more sober lifestyle. A further reduction between 1859 and 1861 correlates with the onset of the revival thus showing that the statistics only served to reinforce the

revivalist's perspective that the revival was cleansing Ulster from its sins. However any changes that did occur were temporary and following trend in deduction in crime that had been happening from the early to mid-1850s.<sup>112</sup>



**Figure 5.1 Showing crime and drunkenness in Ulster between 1850 and 1862 (Source: adapted from House of Commons Parliamentary Papers showing the numbers of people committed or held to bail in each county 1850-1862)**

It was the appearance of a more practical religion during the revival years, which was accessible for the working classes, that pleased members of the ITL.<sup>113</sup> Many of the ideas, which the League attempted to advance throughout society, gained a prominence during the revival years. In this way the revival gave new life to the moral reform movement and the Irish temperance movement as it made temperance ideologies important to everyday life. The revival provided the ITL, in its formative years with the perfect atmosphere

<sup>112</sup> Holmes, J, 'Transformation, Aberration or Consolidation, Explaining the Ulster Revival of 1859' in *Explaining Change in Cultural History*, ed. by Niall O Ciosain (Dublin: University College Dublin Press, 2001), p130.

<sup>113</sup> Mayne, p.24.

within which it could flourish. For instance the number of affiliated societies grew from 17 to 52 between the revival years of 1860 and 1862.<sup>114</sup> The increase in clerical members within the core leadership of the ITL between 1860 and 1863 can be seen as indicative of the heightened religiosity of the League. During these years the ITL was not marginalized within the evangelical movement, but was front and centre. These ideas were touched upon in a letter sent to the *Belfast News-Letter* in 1859. For instance the author stated that

It cannot be denied, and it is now pretty generally acknowledged, that the cause of temperance and moral reform has received a new stimulus in the North of Ireland from the present religious awakening.<sup>115</sup>

Yet despite claims of its supporters, the revival was a popular movement that could not sustain its intensity and was subsequently short lived. The strong connection between the two movements subsequently meant that once the religious fervour began to fade, so did the mass cultural enthusiasm for the temperance movement. The increased fervour for total abstinence during these years is comparable to the total abstinence craze during Father Mathew's crusade. The link with religion was simultaneously the catalyst and destruction of that stage of the temperance movement, and by 1863 the annual meetings of the League had noted a 'flagging zeal' for the temperance movement.<sup>116</sup> In addition the prayer meetings incorporated with temperance meetings during the revival had ended by 1865. Thus, while the revival may not have brought about any permanent increase in total abstinence, it provided ample evidence to the ITL that moral reform had pockets of support which had not been previously explored. This enhanced the ITL's righteous opinion of itself and condescension towards those who did not share their worldview. When discussing the revival in an article in 1870 Mayne stated that

if the standard had been kept up, there would have been likely less need to license new public houses and dram-shops, or to erect great distilleries and breweries in Ireland; poverty, vice and crime would be diminished. But this...we many not expect till church-going people come to the front, and as in England, at meetings of

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<sup>114</sup> *BNL*, 24 March 1861.

<sup>115</sup> *BNL*, 6 October 1859.

<sup>116</sup> *BNL*, 7 April 1863



Conference, Synods and Assembly, give the matter more prominence, and devote some longer time each year to its consideration.<sup>117</sup>

Mayne's argument essentially suggested that if society had continued to place importance on moral reform, and if the churches had continued to support the temperance movement, the issues of drunkenness, crime, and poverty would have been removed from society.

Notably the above quote from Mayne contains many of the same issues that were expressed in his 1856 letter and his inherent problems with the churches. The revival years represent a brief break in ITL member's critical attitude towards formal religion. These rapidly resurfaced once the religious fervour dissipated in the early 1860s and the socio-religious patterns of Ulster returned to institutional homes.

Following the revival years, evangelicalism in Ulster became increasingly fragmented and exposed diverse attitudes to temperance. Some continued to view it as the key to moral reform while others viewed it as a diversion from core spiritual mission. Such tensions are most clearly identified during the Bible Wine issue, which appeared during the third period within the relationship between temperance and organized religion.

### ***c1865 – 1890***

Communion was one of two sacraments within the Presbyterian Church deemed to have a biblical sanction.<sup>118</sup> The sacrament, symbolizing the last meal Christ shared with his disciples prior to his death and subsequent resurrection, is a foundational practice in Christianity. It represents not only a connection between the individual partaking in the sacrament and God, but between the individual members of the community to each other. Thus it was an important event in the liturgical calendar. For instance Andrew Holmes states that

the amount of alcohol bought for these occasions indicates the numbers attending and the social importance of alcohol for Presbyterians before the onset of the temperance movement. It was not merely wine for communion that was purchased, but also

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<sup>117</sup> Mayne, p.24.

<sup>118</sup> Andrew Holmes, *The Shaping of Ulster Presbyterian Belief and Practice, 1770-1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) pp.164-196.

bottles of brandy, claret and whiskey for the consumption of the Kirk session in the session house.<sup>119</sup>

Clearly the annual purchase of large quantities of alcohol maintained a strong connection between the Church and the drink trade. In addition it reinforced its moderationist character. Therefore considering the League's agitation towards the churches in Ireland due to their perceived lack of support for total abstinence, it is clear to see how this became an issue. By 1860s the total abstinence movement attempted to force a formal break in the connection between the church and the drink trade. This led to what was commonly referred to as the 'Bible Wine' issue, which was a battle between the use of fermented or unfermented wine during communion.

The League argued that drinking customs, which sustained the traffic in intoxicating drinks, were sinful especially on the part of the Christian churches.<sup>120</sup> Fundamentally this was an attempt by the ITL to get the churches to set a moral example and remove themselves from the drink trade. However there were also underlying theological debates. For instance moderationists believed that as Jesus had used wine at the Last Supper its use at communion service was viewed as a 'doctrine or commandment of men.'<sup>121</sup> Teetotallers however argued that

divine sanction is nowhere found in the Bible in connection with intoxicating drink; where drink is sanctioned it cannot be proved to be intoxication and where it is intoxicating it cannot be shown to be sanctioned.<sup>122</sup>

The issue regarded interpretation, as both sides found biblical texts which seemingly supported their point of view. However the issue was not as straight forward as other battles, as there were teetotallers who felt it was appropriate to partake in the use of fermented wine at communion service, as it was a biblical sacrament.

The issue surrounding the biblical sanction of abstinence from alcohol was first mentioned in the League's journal in April 1863 in an article entitled 'The Bible and Total

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<sup>119</sup> Holmes, *The Shaping of Ulster Presbyterian Belief and Practice*, p.176.

<sup>120</sup> *ITLJ*, August 1866, p.83.

<sup>121</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1863, p.54.

<sup>122</sup> *ITLJ*, January 1866, p.34.

Abstinence'.<sup>123</sup> The article argued that as many English and Scottish churches were now drinking unfermented wine in the sacraments, the churches in Ireland should follow suit. By the late 1860s Bible Wine was a recurring feature in the monthly publication. Members and guest writers published their arguments on how the Bible sanctioned the use of unfermented wine. From the League's perspective,

there is no other topic of such vital importance to the general and permanent success of the temperance cause as this. Is the Bible for or against us, must be felt to be the question by all who believe it to be the Word of God. To those who have given this subject due investigation it seems truly amazing that so many otherwise intelligent Christians should so long and so tenaciously misrepresent the Holy Scriptures as being on the side of a custom and a traffic that are conducting thousands of souls to perdition every year.<sup>124</sup>

The League's righteous opinion and assumed moral superiority can be identified in this quote.

Therefore the League's attempts to increase church intervention in the drink question led the ITL to criticize traditional interpretations of the Bible. The ITL's opinions are comparable with those of total abstainers throughout Britain. Lambert states that in Wales it was common for teetotallers to argue that the Bible at no point praised intoxicating drink.<sup>125</sup> By using the Bible to legitimize their arguments, teetotallers were adapting to the contemporary evangelical culture within society in which the Bible was important.

However for the ITL religion was not a fundamental ingredient of temperance reform. Teetotallers throughout Britain were prepared to commit to total abstinence even if the Bible went against its ideologies. However the tendency to criticize the Bible was challenging for some members of the League. For instance in 1867 a member, Mr. J.K. Tener, was concerned that *The Journal* was pushing the Bible Wine question too far and as a result making it unpopular. Tener was not wrong in his reservations. In 1869 it was reported that 'two or three ministers have withdrawn from the League because of agitation

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<sup>123</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1863, p26.

<sup>124</sup> *ITLJ*, February 1866, p.12.

<sup>125</sup> Lambert, p.122.

of the Bible Wine Question'.<sup>126</sup> At the same time there were others who pleaded with the League to advance the agitation. One correspondent to *The Journal* in 1865 stated

I, with many others whom I know, hold that that branch of the teetotal question is one of the most important because it lies at the very foundation of the whole argument. Thus, if I have a right, and think that right sanctioned in the Bible, to refuse alcoholic drink myself and keep it out of my house, to secure the safety of my family, how can it be right for me to lead my whole family regularly to the Lord's Table, to take that very liquid which I refuse a place in my own house because of its dangerous character.<sup>127</sup>

In Ulster the largest support for total abstinence from a single denomination came from Presbyterians. The issue led to a division within the church, with determined supporters in each camp. One side refused to use alcoholic wine, while the other refused to use non-alcoholic wine. According to Holmes

all Presbyterians were agreed as to the importance of the Lord's Supper, but liberals and conservatives differed significantly in their approach to discipline and the theological meaning of communion.<sup>128</sup>

Both groups held different beliefs in the presence of Christ in the elements of communion.<sup>129</sup> For example, conservative Presbyterians believed that Christ was spiritually present in the bread and wine. Liberal Presbyterians, on the other hand, viewed the bread and wine merely as symbols or representation of the body and blood.<sup>130</sup> These classifications reflect the differences between the total abstaining members of the ITL who became uncomfortable with the use of alcohol and were prepared to use unfermented wine, and other more traditional members of the church.

In 1875 a conviction arose in the minds of a considerable number of the membership of one Presbyterian Church that the use of fermented wine at the Lord's Table was highly inexpedient and that they could not communicate in such wine. St. Enoch's Presbyterian Church, situated at Carlisle Circus in North Belfast, was the largest Presbyterian Church in

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<sup>126</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1869, p.45.

<sup>127</sup> *ITLJ*, October 1866, p.187.

<sup>128</sup> Holmes, *The Shaping of Ulster Presbyterian Belief and Practice*, p.186.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*

Ireland with the ability to seat 2500 people.<sup>131</sup> Hugh Hanna was the minister at the time, well known for his orthodox theology and conservative politics, and was publicly committed to temperance. A number of teetotal members of his congregation began to feel uncomfortable consuming alcoholic wine. The issue was brought before Hanna who, with the support of two elders, fourteen office-bearers, sixty-six Sunday school teachers and 240 communicants, signed a memorial which sanctioned the ‘use of a cup of unfermented wine at the Lord’s Table for such as cannot comfortably partake of the other wine.’<sup>132</sup> This was an attempt by Hanna and his peers to defuse the situation and allow room for personal convictions. Yet there was a number of members who opposed this decision and argued that by administering two kinds of wine he (Hanna) had introduced in St Enoch’s a “novelty” in the worship of God.<sup>133</sup> The members of St Enoch’s who opposed this approach brought the matter before the Presbytery of Belfast in the hope that Hanna would be ordered to revoke the innovation. Following a vote at the Presbytery the opposition was defeated by nine votes to seventeen and the presence of two types of wine on the communion table remained. As this issue first appeared in Belfast, it again demonstrates the strong total abstinence culture and the willingness of teetotallers to challenge conventional practices to suit their specific lifestyle. As this vote was passed at the presbytery level, it demonstrates a significant total abstinence ethos among the hierarchy of the Presbyterian Church in Belfast.

Yet despite strong support from the presbytery for individual choice, the split and the consequent tension remained difficult as there were conservative members uncomfortable with the change to traditional methods. This caused the Belfast Presbytery to appeal to the General Assembly. During the meeting of the General Assembly in

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<sup>131</sup> J. Ernest Davey, *Charles Davey, DD a Memoir* (Belfast: McCaw, Stevenson and Orr, 1921) , p.49.

<sup>132</sup> *St Enoch’s Presbyterian Church*, (Belfast: n.p. 1895).

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*

Londonderry 8 June 1876, Rev Watts who was professor of theology at Assembly College Belfast, stated that

differences of opinion exist among the members of our congregations in regard to the kind of wine appointed by our Lord to be used in the celebration of His supper; and...these difference of opinion have greatly disturbed the peace of our churches, and led, in some instances, to what many have regarded as grave departure from the teaching of the Scripture in the observances of this most sacred ordinance.<sup>134</sup>

Rev Watts strongly opposed abstainer's opinions on the use of unfermented wine. This is unsurprising, considering his conservative views and his belief that 'the last word on all such matters was to be found in the biblical record.'<sup>135</sup> Rev Watts stated that the Belfast Presbytery 'earnestly asks the Assembly to issue a pastoral letter to all the flock...setting forth authoritatively the views of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on this question.'<sup>136</sup> Clearly this was an attempt to get the General Assembly to take control of the situation and issue a ruling from the top of the Church's hierarchy. This should have eliminated the conflict.

However due to the strong opinions held by both sides, many felt that the Assembly would be wrong to give out a final ruling on the matter. For instance Rev R.F. Pettigrew, Faughanvale Presbyterian Church, proposed an amendment in which the Assembly refrained from committing itself to the absolute judgement that it must have been fermented wine the Lord used at the Last Supper. Hugh Hanna, who declared he held no strong views on the questions himself but stated that he felt bound to respect the sensitive consciences of others, seconded this amendment, his decision essentially echoing the one he had made at St Enoch's<sup>137</sup> Clearly these individuals realised that it would be difficult for the church to adopt a narrow and extreme position on a marginal issues, which would only provoke pointless divisions.

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<sup>134</sup> *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church*, 8 June 1875, p.805.

<sup>135</sup> 'Rev Dr Robert Watts' by Linde Lunney, accessed 26 May 2016, <http://dib.cambridge.org.queens.ezp1.qub.ac.uk/viewReadPage.do>.

<sup>136</sup> *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church*, 8 June 1875, p.807.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, p.805.

Rev G.H Shanks, First Broadmills Presbyterian Church, ignored the resolutions put forth by Watts and Pettigrew and proposed an amendment which stated

that as many members of the Church had conscientious objection to the use of intoxicating wine at the Lord's Supper, because they believed the wine used by the Lord at the institution of the ordinance was an unfermented juice of the vine, and because alcoholic wine was unsuitable, resolved that the Assembly recommended sessions when they deemed it prudent to do so to provide unfermented wine for the celebration of the Lord's Supper.<sup>138</sup>

Shanks was a member of the ITL and the resolution was designed to show support for unfermented wine, which would then force the General Assembly into calling a vote on the matter. Therefore by proposing the amendment and instigating the following debate, the League effectively initiated discussions about the nature of Bible Wine at the top level of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. However total abstainers were not successful. 20 voted for and 301 voted against Shank's resolution. Presbyterians rejected the amendment that would oblige congregations throughout Ireland to endorse two kinds of wine at the communion table. When compared to the vote taken at the Belfast Presbytery, which voted in favour of this measure, it is clear to see that opinions in Belfast were not reflective of the Church as a whole. Subsequently the General Assembly ruled that

as the wine used in the Old Testament, at the Passover and by Our Lord Himself was the ordinary wine of the country they could not sanction the use of unfermented juice of the grape as a symbol in the ordinance.<sup>139</sup>

Furthermore it recommended those whose conscience was troubled by the use of intoxicating wine to use a mild natural wine as this was most in accordance with the institution of this sacrament and the general practice of the Church in all ages.<sup>140</sup> The Assembly also asked all members to adhere to the simple and significant usage of Scripture and to avoid minute questions and divisive courses. Evidently the hierarchy of the Church was anxious to put an end to an issue which was causing a strong division within the denomination.

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<sup>138</sup> *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church*, 8 June 1875, p.807.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*, p.805.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid*.

The issue was also brought before the Irish Methodist Conference in 1875. The plea to allow the use of grape juice was rejected by eighty-five votes to eleven.<sup>141</sup> Clearly the reluctance to change conventional practices in regards to a sacrament was not restricted to the Presbyterian Church. Yet whereas there was a level of debate in other denominations, during this period it was not an issue for the Church of Ireland. According to Malcolm the Church of Ireland maintained ‘that the drinking of wine was lawful according to Scripture, as was abstinence, but that to say that a thing was lawful is not to say that it ought to be done.’<sup>142</sup> The Church of Ireland at this stage completely rejected the growing trend.

Yet despite a general consensus to avoid the contentious issues, the defeat of the motion at the 1875 General Assembly meant that nature of Bible Wine remained an issue for total abstainers. Following this Pyper and Shanks formed the Irish Sacramental Wine Association. The objective of this was ‘the promotion of the Divine Glory, through the removal of the intoxicating cup from the table of the Lord and the entire separation of the Church from the liquor traffic.’<sup>143</sup> As two members of the League formed this organisation, it suggests that the ITL was not as active in the Bible Wine movement as desired by some of its members. Yet as an umbrella organisation with many areas of concern, it is unlikely that the League could give the Bible Wine movement its full attention, thus rendering necessary the formation of a new organisation. However by this stage Bible Wine became a theological issue characterised by debates on the meaning of terms used in the Bible to depict wine and was most contentious within the Presbyterian Church. Therefore as an interdenominational organisation the ITL could not appear to become engulfed within denominational issues.

The religious ideologies behind the Irish Sacramental Wine Association are clearly identifiable in the aforementioned objective. The Bible Wine movement and the desire to prove the biblical sanction of unfermented wine became the central avenue through which

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<sup>141</sup> *Irish Evangelist*, 8 July 1875; Cooney, pp.221-222.

<sup>142</sup> Malcolm, p.279.

<sup>143</sup> *BNL*, 22 April 1875.



religious total abstiners agitated for increased church commitment to total abstinence principles. Thus while fundamental ideas in regards to destroying links between the Church and the drink trade were wholly supported by the League, the organisation was not willing to spend time on theological debates and distanced itself from the movement. Yet Pyper was the travelling agent for, and later a committee member of the League. The League also continued to give lectures and print articles in support of the Bible wine movement, which demonstrated that it remained resolute to its beliefs.

As has been shown the League preferred a more practical religion as opposed to one that concentrated on books and theology. Contextually in the mid-1870s the League was busy with the coffee shop movement and the promotion of social events at the newly opened Lombard Buildings, in addition to the political fight for Sunday Closing and the Permissive Bill. The League's decision to distance itself from the Bible Wine movement demonstrated its commitment to moral reform over religious observance. The Irish Sacramental Wine Association allowed the ITL to support the Bible Wine movement without getting caught up in divisive issues. Nonetheless during annual meetings throughout the 1890s there was an air of caution from some members when they felt the ITL's language was moving too close to the Bible Wine issue.<sup>144</sup> Clearly members thought that involvement in such debates would not be an effective use of the League's time.

Interestingly the 1875 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church also marked the pivotal year in the Church's opinions on total abstinence and the need for more concrete support for moral and social reform. For instance a resolution was passed stating

That as drinking and drunkenness abound to an alarming extent, and are upon the increase, and as it is to be feared that this stage of matters will continue as long as our drinking customs are encouraged and patronized, we believed it is incumbent upon our ministers and people seriously to consider what may be their duty in regard to the use of intoxicating drinks as beverages.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>144</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1895, p.67.

<sup>145</sup> *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church*, 1875, p.807.

Evidently there was no contradiction between supporting the control of drinking in a social context and rejecting total abstainer's request for the use of unfermented wine.

Presbyteries were asked to consider this subject and report back to the committee before 15 April 1876. At the Assembly of 1876 it was stated that

no less than 21 Presbyteries have declared in favour of abstinence from drinking customs, or from intoxicating drinks as ordinary beverages, we feel constrained to commend such abstinence to the consideration and adoption of our people.<sup>146</sup>

Clearly this represented the point in which the Presbyterian Church officially endorsed total abstinence. This was essentially the support from the Church that the ITL had agitated for since its formation in 1858. Therefore when the ITL's distance from the Bible Wine movement is considered in this context, it could be argued that the League stepped away from church agitation as the Presbyterian Church largely satisfied the ITL that it was committed to total abstinence without having to adopt more contested practices around communion.

The mid 1870s marked a change in the various denominations and their relationship with the temperance movement. In 1875 the League stated that 'the progress of temperance in the Churches was doubtless, one of the most encouraging signs of the times.'<sup>147</sup> Total abstinence was no longer an individual choice of the clergy, but rather something that was actively encouraged. Even the Church of Ireland, which had been the least active in the temperance movement, recommended the formation of a temperance society at the Synod in 1875.<sup>148</sup> In the following year the Church of Ireland Temperance Society was inaugurated, the character of which was a 'holy crusade against drunkenness as a sin.'<sup>149</sup> In 1877 the Irish Methodist Church, which had been traditionally moderationist, formally approved the 'training of the young in the principle of total abstinence for all intoxicating

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<sup>146</sup> Harkness, p.60.

<sup>147</sup> *ITLJ*, May 1875, p.57

<sup>148</sup> Crozier, p.51.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*, p.53.

beverages.<sup>150</sup> While total abstinence was generally the preferred approach in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there were still many members who were moderationist. Thus every church stopped short of making total abstinence an official policy. No church could afford to fragment their flock in the face of growing political tensions in Ireland. Many moderationists were influential members who provided substantial financial donations, for example the Guinness family were important contributors to the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.<sup>151</sup> The Irish Protestant churches approach to the temperance movement meant that while total abstinence was supported, it was essentially a personal choice designed to mitigate division within the denomination and allow for religious unity. Ironically this was the exact same stance the ITL took in regards to an individual religiousness, in its attempts to promote a unified movement for moral reform.

The changing relationships between the churches and total abstinence eventually led to changes within the Bible Wine debate. By 1878 the Methodist church had sanctioned the used of unfermented wine when one's conscience called for it. In 1888 the Church of Ireland issued the same ruling.<sup>152</sup> In the Presbyterian Church in the same year, the 1<sup>st</sup> Coleraine Church sent a memorial to the General Assembly asking if the resolution of 1875 absolutely forbade the use of unfermented wine when congregations were practically unanimous.<sup>153</sup> Following this the Assembly decided not to prohibit congregations, when practically unanimous, from using the unfermented juice of the grape.<sup>154</sup> The definite resolution of 1875, which rejected the use of two types of wine, was withdrawn marking a fundamental change in the Assembly's attitude towards the drink question. Total abstinence values were now important enough to sanction a change within sacramental practices. The position adopted by the churches had striking similarities to the Local

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<sup>150</sup> Armstrong, p.66.

<sup>151</sup> Bielenberg, pp.133-154.

<sup>152</sup> Malcolm, p.279.

<sup>153</sup> *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church*, 1888, pp.543-545.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

Option Bill that teetotallers were fighting at this time. For instance both allowed for an area to decide for itself on the presence of alcohol. In practice however this rhetoric was problematic among congregations. Unlike 1<sup>st</sup> Coleraine Church, the majority of congregations did not have a unanimous position. St Enoch's attempted to mitigate the differences of opinion within its congregation by introducing a second table at which unfermented wine would be used. This would give the teetotal members of the congregation the option of going to this table instead of the first table, which held alcohol.<sup>155</sup> The congregation of St Enoch's voted and the compromise of two tables was won by a small majority and carried through.

The changes in the churches' relationship to total abstinence indicated that it was becoming more widespread and no longer the opinion of the minority. The increasing numbers within its ranks and the ability to sway general opinion caused abstainers to become public in their display of disgust at drinking customs. For instance that one advocate 'sat fanning away the alcoholic fumes with her handkerchief' for fear that they would enter her system was a definite sign of change.<sup>156</sup> However the decision to split the communion table was problematic. Taking into consideration the symbolism and theological basis surrounding communion, one is able to understand the opposition. The Lord's Table was about defining community 'and handing each other the elements in a show of religious and communal solidarity.'<sup>157</sup> Communion at this time was increasingly changing from visible expression by sitting at a table to communicants staying in their seats and passing around the bread and wine through the pews. The presence of two types of wine identified two separate communities within the one congregation. This went directly against the unified community, which the communion was meant to symbolise. Subsequent appeals to remove the use of two wines at St Enoch's were made to the Belfast Presbytery and the Assembly in 1896. Both however were defeated. Clearly this was

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<sup>155</sup> Davey, p.49.

<sup>156</sup> AC Anderson, *The Story of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland* (Belfast, 1965), p.91.

<sup>157</sup> A. Holmes, p.184.

evidence of the Belfast Presbytery's and the Assembly's transformed attitude to the nature of Bible Wine. As F.G. Holmes states 'in the end however the use of fermented wine largely disappeared.'<sup>158</sup>

Outside of the Bible Wine movement, which attempted to promote a total abstinence interpretation of the Bible, the total abstinence movement was also accused of promoting temperance as a form of piety in itself.<sup>159</sup> According to some, the ITL almost elevated the anti-drink movement to a religion in itself, which was then replaced pure piety. In other words many felt that the total abstinence movement was a substitute for evangelicalism. Unsurprisingly the League denounced these accusations and again argued that God's work necessitated a variety of methods.

However the ITL did demonstrate many of the characteristics of a 'secular' religion. For instance the League did not convert followers in terms of religion, but it did convert individuals into total abstinence. The total abstinence pledge mirrored the evangelical conversion and represented the point at which an individual embarked upon a new life. Following the pledge, the extent to which it was a religious devotion was a personal choice. Some took it simply as a personal promise to abandon drink; others interpreted it as a devotion to God, much like the Catholic Pioneer pledge.<sup>160</sup> However this was the main cause of anxiety for other Christians who were concerned that through the pledge, the League made total abstinence one's primary obligation and not a devotion to Christ. In 1884 Mr. H Vere White in his article 'Temperance Versus Total Abstinence' articulated the issues with the perceived sacrilegious ideology of the pledge. He stated

solemn vows are sacred things, and ought not to be taken expect for some urgent cause; and the fixing upon one particular temptation, implied in taking a special vow against going in its way, has a strong tendency to give a twist to the character, and distort one's view of the true proportion and relations of Christian duty.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> F.G. Holmes, *Our Presbyterian Heritage* (Belfast: Presbyterian Church in Ireland, 1985) p.118.

<sup>159</sup> *ITLJ*, November 1866, p.121; White, *Temperance Versus Total Abstinence*, (Dublin, 1884).

<sup>160</sup> *ITLJ*, December 1865, p.185.

<sup>161</sup> White, *Temperance Versus Total Abstinence*.

The Lombard Street buildings in the centre of Belfast, which were discussed in Chapter Three, functioned as the League's headquarters, entertainment hall, and incorporated the Lombard Coffee House on the ground floor. The building however also mirrored religious symbolism. For instance this building provided a meeting place for total abstiners thus providing a space for social functions much like church facilities provided for their members. As the physical building of the League it was a representation of the total abstinence community within the public sphere. Thus the rhetorical impression of the League's headquarters is much like that of a denominational church; a community's claim on the public space. The ITL increasingly segregated its followers from the wider society, thus making a separate teetotal community. This teetotal community cut across denominational lines and made total abstinence, not religious ideologies, their fundamental belief. Thus in addition to conversionist tactics into a total abstinence lifestyle, and the provision of a community space, the ITL could have been perceived as partaking in the denominational rivalry that it had been attempting to avoid. Critics such as White were not wrong, as for the ITL total abstinence was its central ethos and a devotion to sobriety was its 'true religion'.

This portion of the chapter has considered the methods employed by the League in this period, which caused the organisation to be viewed as providing a substitute for evangelicalism in the shape of total abstinence. Many viewed these methods employed by the total abstinence movement as sacrilegious. However within this period, when the League was moving towards secular trends and looser interpretations of religious ideas, Christian influences were still visible within its work.

Contemporary society held drunkenness as sinful, and although it argued that drunkards could be saved, the League did not diverge from this opinion.<sup>162</sup> From the League's perspective the point of the sin, and thus the central vice, had shifted from drunkenness to the act of participating in drinking customs. Powering these arguments was

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<sup>162</sup> *ITLJ*, July 1866, p.74.

a changing concept of sin among some evangelicals. Harrison argues that ‘teetotallers challenged current attitudes towards sin.’<sup>163</sup> Therefore total abstinence reformers promoted the idea that it was not only individual actions, in opposition to God and the Bible that were sinful, but also moral wrongs which were injurious to society. The ITL denounced contemporary society for only viewing drunkenness as the sin. For instance the League stated

it is only when a man has got past that stage (drunkenness), when the fatal appetite is formed, when the evil habit is acquired, when all the goodness and moral strength are eaten out of a man, then when it is too late, the warning and admonition are given. As a people, we have yet to learn what is the incipient stage of drunkenness, and that its incipient stage is morally wrong. We believe the use of intoxicating liquor for the promotion of social enjoyment constitutes the beginning and seeds of this hideous vice, and that such use of it is itself an immorality.<sup>164</sup>

Lambert highlights similar findings in Wales where total abstainers argued that ‘the moral quality of the action rested in the preliminary moderate drinking; drunkenness was only the physical quality and not the evil’.<sup>165</sup>

Parallel lines can be drawn between arguments from total abstainers and those in other areas of evangelical philanthropy during this period. For instance Josephine Butler’s campaign against the Contagious Diseases Act in the 1870s essentially put forward the same idea in terms of the source of the vice. The Women’s Petition, submitted in opposition to the Act, argued that the ‘acts punish the sex who are the victims of the vice, and leave unpunished the sex who are the main cause.’<sup>166</sup> Therefore the temperance movement was arguing that current laws punished the victim, the drunkard, and left unpunished the main cause of the vice, the moderate drinkers and the drink trade which was benefitting from the corruption of the weak.

The changing concept of sin must be understood in terms of a changing social and economic world. For instance, of particular concern to the ITL was the increase in leisure

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<sup>163</sup> Harrison, p.186.

<sup>164</sup> *ITLJ*, June 1866, p. 56.

<sup>165</sup> Lambert, p.147.

<sup>166</sup> Helen Mathers, *Parton Saint of Prostitutes Josephine Butler and a Victorian Scandal* (Gloucestershire: The History Press, 2014), p.79.

time and income among the working classes during this period.<sup>167</sup> From the League's perspective an increase in money and time gave the working classes more opportunity to succumb to the evil temptations such as drinking customs, which were seemingly made respectable by the more affluent members of society. These ideas reflect a growing acceptance among some evangelicals that the environment was a factor in facilitating sinfulness.<sup>168</sup> Once this was accepted 'social reform became an inevitable component of the effort to eliminate sin.'<sup>169</sup>

There were also religious influences and interpretations of sin behind the League's political mobilization and agitation for state intervention in the drink question. Public campaigns, pressure politics, and mass meetings were tactics employed by evangelical activists, who placed importance on moral reform throughout Britain in order to pressure parliament into eliminating sin.<sup>170</sup> As the tip of the social hierarchy, the state was the ultimate source from which to set a moral example, and build a utopian environment. The growing belief in state intervention as a means to mitigating vice meant that political involvement was seen as a religious duty.<sup>171</sup> This demonstrates an overarching evolution among some evangelicals from concerns about individual salvation, to social responsibility and finally to state responsibility to care for its citizens. This could offer an alternative explanation for the unrelenting zeal with which certain members of the ITL conducted their political work. The League had made it clear that the means it was prepared to employ would vary with varying circumstance, thus one could do anything if they believed it was in the name of God.<sup>172</sup> For instance in 1885 the secretary Mr Wilkinson may have

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<sup>167</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1875, p.145.

<sup>168</sup> Kenneth D. Brown, 'Nonconformist Evangelicals and National Politics in the late nineteenth century', in *Evangelical Faith and Public Zeal*, ed. by John Wolffe (London: SPCK, 1995), p.144.

<sup>169</sup> Brown, 'Nonconformist Evangelicals', p.144.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid*, p.147.

<sup>171</sup> Brown, p.147.

<sup>172</sup> Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit, the Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p.6.



felt legitimised in using the rigorous campaign to denounce a political candidate, who did not support the Permissive Bill, as he felt he was fulfilling his Christian duty.<sup>173</sup>

Clearly the ITL never fully removed the total abstinence movement from religion. It remained a Christian organisation. The Protestant churches in Ireland remained a vital source of support for the League. For instance the League used the Protestant churches to gain signatures for local petitions during political campaigns and they were the vehicles through which the ITL expanded throughout Ireland, particularly the south. Moreover the ITL did include traditional evangelical activities. Religious articles were published in *The Journal*, temperance sermons were preached, and much of the ITL's recovery work discussed in chapter three was in connection with the women's organisation. This conducted home visits and read the bible to those in need. The League was often involved in missions, the most significant of which was the Blue Ribbon Gospel Mission.

The Blue Ribbon Gospel Mission first appeared in the USA in the 1870s to with an evangelical Protestant focus and an active mission to drunkards. Participants took the teetotal pledge and wore a blue badge in order to symbolise their commitment to their new life. By 1877 it had made its way to London, after which the 'Blue Ribbon Army' spread throughout the UK. By 1890, the organisation had over one million members. By 1882 ITL agents were holding Blue Ribbon meetings throughout Ireland and related missions at the Ulster Hall.<sup>174</sup> In 1884 the League employed Mr. T.E. Murphy in order to hold an island wide mission from Belfast to Limerick.<sup>175</sup> Following this at the League's annual meeting in 1884, Mr. William Wilkinson stated that an estimated 100,000 people wore the ribbon. Meetings inspired a personal conversion after which participants were provided with practical help and support in order to sustain their new life. As Logan argues, this was a movement that bound together moral reform, in the shape of temperance, and religion.

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<sup>173</sup> *BNL*, 2 December 1885.

<sup>174</sup> *BNL*, 10 November 1882.

<sup>175</sup> *ITLJ*, April 1884, p.23.

Thus it was strikingly similar to the character of the revival and the atmosphere within which the ITL had flourished, and it is easy to see why the ITL was so supportive.

Despite the Christian influences upon the organisation, the League was prepared to use any revenues necessary in order to advance the total abstinence movement. In 1866 the core leadership of the League advised its followers that ‘the means that they should use will vary with varying circumstance’; this comment essentially foreshadowed the increasingly secular methods to which the ITL was willing to adapt.<sup>176</sup> The ITL practiced a devotion to God through living a morally dignified life, as opposed to a purely religious piety. This included an adherence to sobriety, health, wealth, moral dignity, respectability, and appropriate social activities. Evangelical outreach of this nature required interaction with the best aspects of the lives and enthusiasms of the people.<sup>177</sup> Through its provision of alternatives the League attempted to offer a more secular religion and attempted to create an alternative world for supporters which mirrored the religious world of evangelicals. In addition it provided moral alternatives to the secular world, such as its coffee shops which attempted to compete with the both the refreshment and social aspect of the public house.<sup>178</sup> The Saturday night concerts for citizens of the city, which the League organized in the 1890s, were an attempt to remove any need for frequenting a public house on a Saturday evening in search of entertainment. These were morally dignified activities removed from sin or vice, thus fulfilling the religious advancement of the League’s followers. Followers also maintained their respectability, their health, and wealth thus receiving temporal advantages. The League provided its followers with an appropriate social environment encompassing an alternative lifestyle, which could protect them from, and compete with, contemporary customs. As Brown states, evangelicalism and sociability

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<sup>176</sup> *ITLJ*, November 1866, p.120.

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid*, p.168.

<sup>178</sup> *Minute Book*, 9 August 1873.

became compatible and ‘society as a whole was mobilized by the Gospel to care for the needy.’<sup>179</sup>

The liberalizing tendency of some evangelical organisations and the result of secular competition are highlighted by Norman Vance, who discusses the YMCA’s shift from a purely conservative bible-study organisation to one that focused on recreation, adventure and play time.<sup>180</sup> Organisations of this nature are described as promoting a ‘practical morality without oppressively religious connotations.’<sup>181</sup> Thus the lack of conversionist evangelicalism and the prominence of moral reform, as the League’s fundamental objective, suggest that the organisation was imbued with receptiveness to a more practical religion from its formation. Vance states that enlightened evangelical clergy supported the liberalizing tendency in the YMCA.<sup>182</sup> Parallels can be drawn with the ITL, where evangelical clergy such as Johnston and Morgan drove forward the ITLs work.

### ***Post 1890***

Interestingly by this period the Irish Protestant churches had developed an increasingly strong total abstinence ethos. For instance within the Presbyterian Church resolutions were constantly made stating

The General Assembly most earnestly urges on all members of the Church the great and pressing duty of personal abstinence and of entire separation from the drink traffic and from drinking customs.<sup>183</sup>

In 1905 a memorial from Londonderry and Kilrea presbytery stated that congregations should refrain from electing to office in the church persons who are engaged in the drink traffic.<sup>184</sup> A memorial from the Presbytery of Derry set forth that it was desirable for the Assembly to find some way of getting wine for the communion table independently of licensed traders and to devise some way that congregations who want to could procure a

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<sup>179</sup> Brown, p.145.

<sup>180</sup> Vance, pp.168-169.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid, p.169.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid, pp.168-169.

<sup>183</sup> *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church*, 1875, p.805.

<sup>184</sup> *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church*, 1905, p.1033.

natural wine without having to turn to the ordinary trade channels. In 1906 the General Assembly passed a resolution which stated that they supported the ‘ultimate prohibition of the (drink) traffic and the vigorous administration of the law.’<sup>185</sup> What can be taken from this was a growing acceptance, from the 1870s, of the Church’s collective responsibility for the sobriety of its community and a fear that its practices were giving the drink trade a level of respectability. However at no point did any of the churches make total abstinence an absolute requirement of church membership. This remained an issue for the League. In 1906 the League passed a resolution, which stated

that this meeting rejoices that the feeling is now generally prevalent that the responsibility for immediate advancement on all lines of Temperance Reform rests with the Christian Churches, and that they are realizing their responsibility, it is hoped that all Ministers of Religion, and office bearers will be aroused to a sense of the duty incumbent upon them of setting a safe example to their people by becoming Personal Abstainers.<sup>186</sup>

Notably while this praised the churches for their temperance work, the League retained its attitude of external pressure. This resolution continued to be passed well into the twentieth century.<sup>187</sup>

By the 1890s temperance had migrated towards the more secular end of the spectrum. While this was not anti-religious, an agenda of moral and social reform increasingly gained the ascendancy. Therefore by the time the churches had changed their opinions on total abstinence, temperance reform had developed an increasingly secular character.<sup>188</sup> It has already been mentioned how the ITL preferred an increasingly social approach to the temperance movement by the late 1870s, as evidenced by the coffee house movement, the provision of a community space, and the instigation of entertainment evenings. This dissertation has already demonstrated how health arguments were originally used by the League to show how what was morally and religiously wrong also destroyed the body. Over the nineteenth century the ITL increasingly called for scientific and medical answers

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<sup>185</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.79.

<sup>186</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906 p.103.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid*, 1912, p.79.

<sup>188</sup> Vance, p.172.

for the drink question. Despite the League's protestations that it was God's work, this suggests a desire to place total abstinence arguments on a more tangible basis than simply a moral wrong or a religious sin. As this increasing inquiry proved the detrimental effects of alcohol, the total abstinence argument became progressively secular. Arguments were no longer an indiscernible moral, or religious, concept but based upon concrete evidence of the physical detrimental effects that alcohol had on the body.<sup>189</sup> As Logan finds in Scotland 'the march of science which propelled medical men into the temperance movement also undermined scripture.'<sup>190</sup>

The ITL's increasingly secular methods were perhaps most visible in the changes within its material for youth. Children's material was essentially a simplified version of the League's central ideas. The first piece of material for children was published in *The Journal* in March 1863. The article 'To Lads and Lasses' compared the lives of those living by total abstinence and intemperance. The underlying connotations suggest that drinking led one into sin, degradation, and sickness while abstinence led to respectability, education and prosperity. For instance the League stated to readers

think how sweet to have the smile of God upon your behaviour, and how much more likely you are...to be a good Christian, to live usefully, to die peacefully and be happy for evermore.<sup>191</sup>

The lesson for children evidently promoted the idea that abstinence was a duty to God, demonstrating the Christian ideologies behind the League's early teachings for children. By the Edwardian period there was a substantial change in the lessons the League wanted to impart to children. There remained a firm belief that raising children in the practice of total abstinence would eventually eliminate drinking customs. Children were to be the citizens of a perceived future utopian society.

However by this period the lessons on hygiene and temperance that the ITL's agent Mr. B.T. Herring delivered in schools were of a scientific character. This followed twenty

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<sup>189</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906-1912.

<sup>190</sup> Logan p.456.

<sup>191</sup> *ITLJ*, March 1863, p.34.

years of agitation towards the Commissioner of National Education to make the teaching of hygiene and temperance compulsory in all national schools in Ireland. These lessons were part of the school's science program, which the League argued, should take the place of religious instructions once a week. As discussed in Chapter Three lessons considered the body as a machine, the effects of wine on the system and the benefits of exercise and rest.<sup>192</sup> In addition chemical experiments or diagrams demonstrated these ideas. The League was now driven as much by scientific research and secular attitudes as they were by religious morality with its emphasis on respectability and restraint. Removing temperance from religious lessons and placing it within the realm of science reflects the League's fundamental idea that visual results were more influential than conceptual ideas, and thus a stronger foundation from which to bring about change. This demonstrates that the League followed the trajectory of the temperance movement as a whole and became increasingly secular by the early twentieth century.

## ***Conclusion***

Historians have argued that the ITL was an evangelical organisation motivated by religious revivalism.<sup>193</sup> However this argument fails to acknowledge both the contentious relationship the League had with organised religion, and the secular methods that it was willing to incorporate. The temperance movement represented a spectrum with religious and secular methods at either end. The founding members of the ITL structured the organisation so that it was located in the middle of this spectrum, ultimately making it flexible to a range of methods, and a platform upon which all total abstinence reformers could unite. As Harrison argues, total abstinence organisations represented a half way point between rejection of and participation in religion.<sup>194</sup>

The ITL was motivated by total abstinence reform above all else and blamed a lack of church involvement in the movement as a fundamental reason for the what it perceived as

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<sup>192</sup> *ITLRB*, 1906, p.11.

<sup>193</sup> Malcolm, p.256; McIntosh, p.12.

<sup>194</sup> Harrison, p.234.

the failure of the Irish temperance movement. The League argued that society, and the churches, had to set an example in order to remove temptation from society. The League's arguments were originally based upon generic religious ideologies concerning collective responsibility for society, a broader interpretation of vice and a conviction of one's own sin. While the League desired church support for the movement total abstinence reformers had evolved to believe that piety was not enough. The ITL ultimately attempted to instigate moral reform that brought about tangible change for its followers. As an organisation it was interdenominational in character, but total abstinence and not religious conviction was its core doctrine. For the ITL commitment to a total abstinence lifestyle could include a commitment to religion however it was not dependent upon it.

The alignment of moral and religious ideologies during the revival years brought widespread acceptance of the League's fundamental ideologies and an atmosphere in which it could flourish in its formative years. However this convergence was short lived and by the early 1860s the League was once again at the margins of the evangelical community. The ITL continued to assert that it was conducting God's work. However in the period following the revival, tensions had exposed a range of diverse attitudes to temperance, which led to the Bible Wine issue. Following this a Christian influence upon the League's methods was still visible, but the prevalence of moral reform, and the need to set an example, ultimately meant that the ITL's religious principles evolved into a form of social religion. In this the ITL demonstrated a devotion to God through good living as opposed to pure piety. Simultaneously, however, the increasing secularisation of society and need to compete with contemporary entertainments caused the League to move further from traditional evangelical ideologies. In this the League followed the trajectory of the temperance movement as a whole and incorporated more secular methods. However the acceptance of total abstinence by the Irish churches in the late nineteenth century enabled the ITL to concentrate on other areas of temperance work as opposed to church agitation. Yet by this stage the social aspect of the temperance movement, in addition to the

increasing medical research into the detrimental effects of alcohol reduced the need for church intervention, as the physical and social benefits to one's life provided the visual proof that the League's vice-president, Rev James Morgan had argued was vital for success.



## **Conclusion**

### **A Platform Upon Which All Could Unite?**

The Irish temperance movement which began in 1829, transitioned rapidly from moderation to total abstinence, with both of these styles attempting to implement change through the use of moral suasion. However, the continuation of social issues caused some temperance reformers to believe that change would only be possible through the legislative control of drinking customs and the drink trade. Between the 1820s and 1850s the structure of the Irish temperance movement caused two fundamentally different styles of temperance to attempt to work together using one methodology. Prior to 1858 the movement lacked leadership and direction, causing a fragmented and disorganised movement that was weak in comparison to the national temperance organisation that had been appearing in England and Scotland from the 1840s.

Individuals who would later become prominent in the formation of the ITL were actively involved in the Irish temperance movement prior to 1858. Thus the roots of the ITL can be traced back to the founding of the temperance movement in Ulster in 1829. Individuals such as Mayne, Morgan, Johnston and Haughton became the driving force behind the temperance movement then, and were at the forefront each time it transitioned into a new period. Unsurprisingly, it was these individuals who made attempts to revive the temperance movement in Ulster in 1856, leading to the formation of the ITL in 1858.

The perpetuation of drunkenness in society, and the crime, poverty and disease that was believed to come from it, convinced the founders of the ITL that the current structure of the movement was inadequate to the problem. A stronger temperance movement was needed in Ireland than that which had already been attempted through the tradition of different styles using one methodology. Therefore the founding members of the ITL aimed to restructure the movement by focusing on uniting total abstainers, regardless of their preference for moral suasion or legislation, together in a common cause. The formation of

the ITL reflected the vision of progressive individuals who aimed to modernise contemporary reform activity and in so doing restructured and unified the Irish temperance movement. These individuals pooled their collective experience and developed a temperance organisation with an extensive network that was professional, focused and on par with the large national bodies that had been functioning in Britain from the 1840s.

Unlike the previous stages of the Irish temperance movement, the focus of the new structure was fundamentally on unity of effort of all total abstinence activity in Ireland under the umbrella of the ITL. As this research has shown, the ITL was successful in this objective, however it cannot be denied that there were issues with this agenda and tensions within it.

Firstly, the ITL was successful in uniting different methodologies in one organisation. By structuring the organisation in this way, the ITL enabled both moral suasionists and legislative prohibitionists to work together. Within its moral suasion operations the ITL developed an alcohol free sub-culture that provided a safe environment for its members away from the temptations of the largely intemperate society. This was an impressive social movement in which all members of society could participate, and provided abstainers with a range of alternatives to contemporary practices. Simultaneously, the ITL conducted a strong political campaign that attempted to pass temperance legislation and introduce prohibition. The culmination of moral suasion and legislative prohibition meant that the League's work was inclusive and aimed at all classes in society. However, there were limitations to this rhetoric and within the teetotal sub-culture contemporary social structures remained. There were elements of 'social control' within the League's aims, yet its work cannot be reduced to this sole objective. For instance, in terms of state control of the drink trade, the ITL believed that any infringements upon individual freedoms were justified as it was protecting citizens from a destructive habit. Unlike moderationist organisations, the ITL did not exclude those who had succumbed to drunkenness, but rather

welcomed them, arguing that they were capable of redemption and living a fulfilled life through the commitment to sobriety.

The formation of the ITL in 1858 professionalised and strengthened the prohibition movement in Ireland by participating in a UK wide movement in co-operation with the UKA and the SPBTA. This section of the League's work aimed to bring about a political transformation in order to protect citizens from alcohol and fortify the drink-free culture developed by its moral suasion work. Yet in terms of legislation passed the League's work in this area was not as successful as its members had hoped. Only one out of three pieces of legislation, considered central to the fight for prohibition, was passed between 1858 and 1914. This was the Irish Sunday Closing Bill 1878, which was made permanent in 1906. The League's failure to secure substantive and enduring legislation was due to prohibitionist's inability to compromise. Throughout all the political debates surrounding temperance legislation, members of ITL continued to focus on what they perceived as the limitations to legislation, as opposed to any benefits it could effect among society. The ITL's unrelenting zeal was enhanced by the political power it had due to the status of its core leadership as influential businessmen and MPs, and through its connections with the UKA and the Liberal Party. However the League's blind zeal and absolutist character began to weaken its support and polarised northern and southern temperance reformers in Ireland. As a result this diminished the political power wielded by the Irish temperance movement as a whole, which affected its ability to pass temperance legislation like the successful campaign for Local Option in Scotland in 1913. That being said, the temperance movement in Ireland functioned against a backdrop of national conflict that was not to be found in the rest of the UK. Total abstinence reformers made attempts to overcome their differences and consolidate their political power under the Irish National Temperance Executive in the early twentieth century however this was too late to effect lasting change and the temperance movement was undoubtedly weakened by the increasing political tensions in Ireland from the 1880s onwards.

Secondly, the ITL was successful in uniting local total abstinence societies and reformers throughout Ireland under its organisation. By 1912 the ITL had at least one affiliated society in twenty-seven out of the thirty-two counties in Ireland. In addition, by the same year the ITL was receiving subscriptions from individual members from twenty-eight counties throughout Ireland. However, while such national coverage could enable the ITL to be described as an all-Ireland movement, there were restrictions to this rhetoric. The League was particularly successful in uniting the Protestant total abstinence movement in Ireland. It was a pan-Protestant movement and thus the League's all-Ireland status can be attributed to expansion through the well-established networks of the Protestant churches. The ITL struggled to become truly inclusive as evidenced by the considerable lack of involvement from Catholic temperance reformers. In addition the ITL failed to balance its strong Ulster and Protestant ethos. By 1912, 77% of subscriptions, 81% of affiliated societies and 71% of vice-presidents continued to be drawn from the northern province. However, as was shown in this research such failures, if indeed they can be called such, cannot all be attributed to the ITL. Wider social, cultural and sectarian divisions in Ireland and increasing political tensions following the rise of the Home Rule movement must also shoulder some of the blame.

It is impossible to overlook these divisions in Ireland; they are a fundamental part of its history. However research should not be limited to segregations of the past. It is important to highlight the connections between people too often considered detached, and the tensions among those thought to be akin. Thus this research is the first study to look at a temperance organisation within the entirety of the temperance movement. While this work acknowledges the religious and political tensions that affected the temperance movement it did not use these as boundaries for historical research. Subsequently this research challenges a number of arguments in the current historiography. For instance Malcolm argues that the temperance movement in Ulster grew out of the Presbyterian Church, and the growth of total abstinence in the 1850s was in conjunction with revivalism

and evangelicalism.<sup>1</sup> However by focusing on the temperance work within the Presbyterian Church Malcolm only considered a minor section of temperance work within the religious sphere and therefore ignored the reality of the origins and growth of the temperance movement. This research has challenged Malcolm by detailing the often-strained relationship between the churches in Ireland and the temperance movement from 1829 onwards. For example from the formation of the UTS in 1829, the Irish temperance movement operated as separate entity due to a lack of interest from the Presbyterian Church.

Malcolm also used the Presbyterian clergy's total abstinence committee, formed in 1850, as proof of a teetotal element within the Church. However as has been shown in Chapter Five the formation of the teetotal committee was in order to take a stand against the Church's support for moderation, and a display of the type of temperance abstainers believed the Church should advocate. In addition, to suggest that the growth of total abstinence in the 1850s was also caused by religious revivalism is too over simplify the reality. For example as this research has shown that members of the ITL, while they were influenced by evangelicalism were in fact marginalised. The importance placed on moral reform meant their ideas were more in keeping with English non-conformists as opposed to Irish evangelicals who were concerned with conversions at this time. The Ulster Revival was the one time in which there was a level of cohesion between the League and the rest of the Irish evangelical community. The formation of the ITL pre-dates the onset of the Ulster Revival, however the desire for moral reform made them mutually compatible. This was short lived and by the early 1860s the League was again marginalised.

The distance between the ITL and organised religion was a deliberate move by its core leadership in order to allow the organisation to adapt to the increasing secularisation of the temperance movement over the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thirdly therefore, the ITL was successful in uniting both religious and secular temperance

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<sup>1</sup> Malcolm, pp.160-169.

reformers within its organisation. The founding members of the organisation placed the League in the middle of the spectrum between religious and secular temperance methods. This enabled the ITL to cater for both types of members, and to participate in both an evangelical and a more secular temperance culture and the promotion of medical and scientific advancements in terms of the drink question. The ITL's arguments were based upon generic religious ideologies, collective responsibility for societal needs and a belief in the need for moral and social reform. But it was commitment to the values of total abstinence that was the fundamental doctrine by which the core leadership of the ITL conducted their lives. This could include religious ideologies, but was not dependent upon them.

From its formation in 1858, the ITL professionalised the Irish temperance movement and gave societies and reformers a common cause. It made total abstinence not only the dominant form of temperance but also a way of life through the development of an inclusive comprehensive drink-free culture. Due to this, the ITL set the framework for temperance work in Ireland. Even the Pioneers, who largely remained an exclusively Catholic temperance movement, debated the legislative temperance campaigns within which the ITL was involved and publically endorsed ITL policies, such as local option over prohibition.<sup>2</sup> In his work on the Pioneers Ferriter's argues that

it is tempting to glean from this sweeping analysis that a temperance movement in Ireland was an organisational and cultural *fait accompli* at this point. It was nothing of the sort. On a concentrated level, the temperance battle in Ireland was in its infancy.<sup>3</sup>

By showing the comprehensive temperance movement developed by the ITL by the end of the nineteenth century this research fundamentally challenges the argument that the Irish temperance movement was in its infancy. Ferriter used Lambert's work, which focuses on Wales, in order to show the contentious relationship between drinkers and non-

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<sup>2</sup> Ferriter, p.76.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, p.223.

drinkers and the bitter political battles concerning anti-drink legislation, in an attempt to demonstrate how Ireland was different. He argues that the

Temperance debate in Ireland had not yet become polarised to this extent, and this was more than likely attributable to a preoccupation with the impact of the Great Famine and maybe a sense of disillusionment with Father Mathew.<sup>4</sup>

Conversely however when the ITL is taken into consideration there can be no doubt that the temperance movement in Ireland was on-par with the movement throughout Britain. Therefore this research has used Lambert, and other historians of British temperance, in order demonstrate that all of the same issue found in England, Scotland and Wales at this time were to be found in Ireland. The social, political and religious issues of nineteenth century Ireland did not destroy the temperance movement in the nineteenth century, it merely meant that reformers had to work within a different context to their peers. This research also disagrees with Ferriter's assumption that the formation of the Pioneers was not a *fait accompli*. By the end of the nineteenth century there were multiple national temperance organisation throughout Britain, anti-drink legislation was a contentious debate in Parliament, the Protestant Churches in Ireland by this stage all supported total abstinence to some degree, large cultural events were organised throughout Ireland by the ITL, and in addition the total abstinence organisation the League of the Cross was running a popular Catholic teetotal movement in England from the 1870s.<sup>5</sup> Arguably by the 1890s the Catholic Church in Ireland had no choice but to join the movement. An elite total abstinence organisation strongly linked to the Irish devotional revolution was the only niche left for the Church.

According to Duncan, the outbreak of the Great War 'saw the most radical experiment in the drink control ever attempted in Britain'.<sup>6</sup> During these years prominence was given to the sobriety of both the citizen at home and those on the front lines in order to

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p.224.

<sup>5</sup> *Manchester Times*, 14 October 1876.

<sup>6</sup> Robert Duncan, *Pubs and Patriots: The Drink Crisis in Britain During World War One* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013), p.3.

foster national strength. This had not previously been found within society. During the war years the ITL increased its agitation. Its arguments typically promoted messages such as ‘Our soldiers are giving up their lives for you, won’t you give up your drink for them.’<sup>7</sup> However, while the War aligned the temperance movement with national concerns in Britain, it was becoming increasingly contentious in Ireland. Attempts to control the drink trade during the war years were opposed by Nationalists, as they believed it would destroy one of Ireland main industries.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, the drink question in Ireland became engulfed in wider political tensions, with Unionists and the temperance movement on one side and Nationalists and the drink trade on the other. This divide was further polarised by the outbreak of the Easter Rising in 1916. The impact of the war years on the ITL and the drink question in Ireland is outside the bounds of this thesis, however, it serves to demonstrate that the commencement of the First World War in the summer of 1914 marks the end of the first distinct phase in the ITLs history. After the war, and against a backdrop of rebellion, civil war and the partition of Ireland, the League’s rhetoric of uniting the temperance movement across Ireland under its umbrella became increasingly difficult to accept, especially after 1921 and the formation of the Northern Ireland state.

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<sup>7</sup> Minute Book, 16 April 1915.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.



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